

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ST 551F Survey of Systematic Theology

Fall, 2009

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Adjunct Professor

Class meeting times and location:

Saturdays, 9:00 a.m – 5:00 p.m.

9/5, 10/10, 11/7, 12/12

New Ebenezer Baptist Church
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Florence, SC 29506

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OFFICE HOURS

I prefer to be reached after 6:00 PM in the evenings unless it is an urgent call.

CATALOG 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

NOTE: 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.

1. Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994. 691 pages.
2. Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology? – An Invitation to Study God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 150 pages.
3. John H. Leith, *Basic Christian Doctrine*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. 350 Pages.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

1. James I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993.
2. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998. 1312 pages.

3. Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Price Press, 2004. 3 Volumes.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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 2 class sessions or 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. This will count for 50% of your final grade.

Reading Assignments – There will be reading assignments on the material covered in the lectures and readings assigned in Grenz and in Leith. You will write a summary on each reading with personal critique. You will also write a paragraph summarizing your beliefs on each of the doctrinal topics covered for that assignment. These summaries will be worth 25% of your grade.

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 seminary's web page at <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/fairbairn/>.*

The major paper will consist of a statement of faith (one or two pages, single-spaced), covering the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. This will be accompanied by a paper of 10-12 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.

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 seminary's web page at <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/fairbairn/>. 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 exam will receive a numerical grade. The scale is:

A	95-100	B	88-90	C	80-83	D	72-75
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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 papers 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.

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|---------------------------|---|
| September 5 th | Introduction to Systematic Theology and the Doctrines of Revelation, Scripture and God <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Grenz, pp. 1-76; 379-404;• Read Leith, pp.1-65;• Read Grenz and Olson, Who Needs Theology? (whole book) |
| October 10 th | The Doctrine of God (cont.) and the Doctrines of the Person And Work of Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Grenz, pp. 77-123; 243-356;• Read Leith, pp. 124--159;• DUE: Summary #1 |
| November 7 th | The Doctrines of the Holy Spirit and Salvation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Grenz, pp. 357-378; 405-460;• Read Leith, pp. 160-233;• DUE: Summary #2 |
| December 12 th | The Doctrines of the Church, Sacraments and Last Things <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Grenz, pp. 461-654• Read Leith, pp. 234-305• DUE: Summaries 3 & 4• Due: Major Paper |

IMPORTANT SEMINARY POLICIES FOR ALL COURSES

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.

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.

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.

Plagiarism

Students should review in the catalog the seminary policy on plagiarism (using the work of someone else and claiming it as your own or failing to give citation of credit) and the penalties, which include failure of a course, loss of tuition paid for the course, and sometimes suspension from the seminary.

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."

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 (12-point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the "Style and Form Standards" (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.

A FINAL WORD

A study of theology should never be approached as merely an academic exercise—completing course requirements solely for the purpose of gaining credits and ultimately a degree. This course offers students an opportunity to gain an overview of all that God has revealed to us in the Scriptures, wherein the glory of God is revealed, as he works to save a people for himself. Our study should engage our hearts as well as our

minds, and lead us to worship. Let us pray that God will open our hearts and minds to the beauty and glory of his being and ways with us, and move us to adoring service.