

Education and Theology

CE 560

3 Credits

Fall Semester 2007

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Erskine Theological Seminary

“Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning”

Class Meets

Tuesdays

7:00 - 10:00

First Class: Tuesday September 4

Catalog Description

This course examines the implications of theological propositions, assumptions, and traditions for the practice of Christian Education. Theological approaches to Christian Education are examined from the perspectives of knowledge about God, revelation, the nature of the church, the nature of humanity, and the mission of the church in the world. The aim of the course is to ensure consistency between theology and Christian Education in the Church's educational programs and ministries.

Course Format and Structure

The course Theology and Education will be taught as a graduate level seminar. A graduate seminar is characterized by instruction, dialogue, collaboration, reading, critique, presentations, and a lot of critical thinking. The seminar format lends itself to fostering discipline-specific skills that will enable a field practitioner to thoughtfully engage in effective Christian Education ministry. The three hours of each class will be divided between faculty presentation, student presentation, and critique and discussion of assigned readings and presentations. Students are viewed as co-learners and co-teachers and to that end are expected to take an active rather than a passive role in each class session. The focus of the seminar is the relationship between Christian theology and Christian Education ministry practice (local church, Christian school, Christian college, theological school).

This course will have an online component and as such is defined as a *hybrid course*. A hybrid course integrates face-to-face classroom learning with online learning experiences that extend and expand the on campus classroom. At the first class session more information will be presented about this feature of the course and your online access code will be given to you. Do not try to access the online classroom prior to the first class session. Certain course requirements will be connected to the online classroom and will constitute part of your grade for the course. If you do not have Internet connection and cannot fulfill this part of the course requirements, you will need to take this course when it is offered by Dr. Davis.

Theological Disciplines

The course description leaves undefined what is meant by “theology.” In this class you will be encouraged to come at the discussion about the relationship between theology and Christian Education ministry through one of many possible theological disciplines. Typically, the default setting for thinking theologically is systematic theology but that is not the only option. Some prefer to think and study in biblical theology categories that are quite different from a systematic theology approach. Still others may want to take a historical theology approach if they have a more historical interest in how theology has developed over the centuries. It is also possible to take a contemporary theology approach to the course and to think about theology in terms of specialized theologies such as liberation theology, postmodern theology, feminist theology, or any number of current

theological trends. We will be reading from several of these theological disciplines but you may wish to specialize in one particular field of theology that is appealing or interesting to you. You will probably want to write your final paper from this perspective. In fact, you will need to decide before you write the paper what your theological discipline will be and write your paper from that perspective.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Explicate the relationship between theology and Christian Education.
2. Expose students to the literature of this relationship from a variety of theological and denominational perspectives.
3. Encourage students to think about how their theology can be applied to Christian Education ministry.
4. Facilitate the formation of each student's theology of Christian Education from within their own theological tradition.

Strategies Employed to Achieve Learning Outcomes

Some of our intended learning outcomes can be achieved by direct presentation of information in the form of lectures or other dissemination methods via the online classroom. Other outcomes will best be achieved by the use of collaborative techniques involving reciprocal interaction, discussion, dialogue, and debate. Some of the outcomes can be achieved individually as well as collectively. Individual reading, thinking, and writing will be an essential component. If each student doesn't engage the material and the course concepts then it will be difficult to achieve outcome # 4 for example. Each person's individual preparation will be shared collectively and the intersection of this encounter will spark further insight and deliberation among us. Part of my role, as I see it, is to stimulate, challenge, and prod you into higher levels of critical thinking and reflection about the implications of theology for Christian Education practice.

One of the central strategies for this course will be the ongoing process of *Memoing*. The memo written to oneself is a central piece of the development of grounded theory in the conduct of action or qualitative research in the social sciences. I want to borrow this technique and use it in the context of this course to assist you in the process of formulating your own theology of Christian Education. The *first step* in the process is to keep a few 3x5 cards with you at all times. As you read literature for this course and others you are taking jot down ideas, thoughts, concepts, or questions that hit you about the relationship between theology and education. The *second step* is to collate the accumulated cards into a one page *Memo to Myself*. There are no rules for how to write this Memo but use the writing of it as an opportunity to focus your attention on one or two issues, problems, concepts, or ideas that have been percolating in your mind as a result of your reading and class experiences. You will be expected to write and turn in a series of Memos that encourage you to put your thoughts in written form. The *third step* is to place all of the Memos that you write during the course of the semester before you on a table and begin the process of identifying interlocking themes, concepts, problems, or patterns that emerge from your protracted observation of your Memos. After this,

begin writing your final theological paper for the course. If you've done your homework all along, you will have an easier time writing this final paper and have a sense of closure to the course.

Assessing Learning Outcomes

The assessment process, like the rest of the course, will be a collaborative effort. I will assess you, you will assess me, and you will assess yourself. My assessment of you will take the form of grading class presentations and written submissions. Your assessment of me will take the form of the standard end-of-course evaluation. Your assessment of yourself will involve a special assessment instrument which I will construct that will enable you to thoughtfully reflect upon your own learning and effort.

Required Textbooks

None. A selected readings packet will be distributed to students by the professor. In some cases, students will be required to read reserved books in the seminary library or have additional readings assigned.

Course Learning Experiences

1. Read all assigned materials critically, carefully, and thoughtfully.
2. Come prepared to each class session to participate in a grounded discussion & dialogue. Interact with class presentations by being actively engaged.
3. Write three (3) Memos to Myself when assigned by the professor.
4. Make one class presentation. Due when assigned by mutual decision. More information about this will be given in class.
5. Regularly participate and contribute to the discussions in the online classroom. You are expected to make at least one contribution or response each week of the semester except for Thanksgiving Break. No makeup is permitted. The contribution must be made the week it is due or it does not count. The course management software tracks this for me.
6. Write a final theology of Christian Education paper. The paper should be between 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced, and follow either Turabian or APA style format. The paper should reflect your best thinking and give evidence of your exposure to the literature in the field. At least ten appropriate resource citations should appear in your bibliography and give evidence of your interaction with them. Quotations should be limited in use to the support of claims or assertions made by you in the body of your paper. Do not use them to fill space. They must *advance* your argument in a coherent and logical manner. Be sure to edit your submission prior to turning it in for evaluation. The editing process should eliminate typographical errors, grammatical mistakes, and spelling errors. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the seminary policy on plagiarism. Those who violate the plagiarism policy will face stiff sanctions. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism after reading the seminary policy, please contact me and clarify any questions you may have *prior to*

submitting your work. I would like to have this paper turned in during the last full month of the semester in stages. This will spread the grading out over several weeks and lighten an already heavy academic load.

Assignment Grading Scale

Class Presentation	10 points
Reading & discussion	10 points
Online classroom activity	10 points
Memo to Myself	10 points per (3 Memos total=30 points)
Final education & theology paper	40 points

Grading Criteria

Grading for all required assignments will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

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.

Grading Option

All written submissions may be re-submitted for grading if the grade you received was not what you hoped to achieve. In order to qualify for re-grading, the re-submitted work is to be turned back to me by the next scheduled class period and must be accompanied by the originally submitted document. You can only receive a higher grade on a re-submission not a lower one. If you receive a higher grade, that grade will be recorded in place of the original grade. If you receive a grade equal to or lower than the original, no changes will be made in your original grade. This option may only be used one time for

each required assignment. This option may not be used for the last assignment.

Prohibitions

In an ideal classroom free from the contamination of human sin there would be no need to issue prohibitions. However, in light of our propensity to choose improperly the following prohibitions are noted for the benefit of everyone.

1. No cell phones on during class and no taking of cell phone calls during class unless it is a family emergency.
2. No surfing the Net during class, doing online banking, sending/receiving emails, sending/receiving IMs, or otherwise diverting your attention through the use of technology.
3. No late entry into class. The class starts exactly at 7:00 p.m. Be on time.

The professor reserves the right to penalize a student's grade if caught violating anyone of these prohibitions. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

1. From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." For further details, please read the current Seminary Catalog.
2. Any missed class or portion of a class will adversely affect your grade. Attendance is expected unless prevented by illness or emergency. All late assignments will be lowered 1/2 letter grade for each day (or any portion of a day) late past the stated due date.
3. Inclusive Language Policy. The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.
4. Once you have completed, signed, and submitted a registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a **BINDING CONTRACT**, and business office billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a drop/add form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.**

5. My normal office hours on campus are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Tuesday-Thursday. However, please be aware that in addition to my full-time duties as Professor of Christian Education, I also serve as Associate Dean, Co-Direct Erskine Wellness, serve on and chair several standing committees. If you do not find me in my office during these posted hours, please leave me a note, leave a voice mail on my phone, or drop me an email using the email address at the top of this syllabus. I will make every effort to get back to you in a timely fashion.
6. Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the [Student Handbook](#) and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.
7. I reserve the right to make adjustments and modifications to this syllabus up until the first class meeting. The official syllabus for the course will be the one made available on the first day of class.

Recommended Literature

Religious Education and Theology. Norma H. Thompson (ed). Religious Education Press, 1982.

Theologies of Religious Education, Randolph Crump Miller (ed). Religious Education Press, 1995.

Theological Approaches to Christian Education. Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller. Abingdon Press, 1990.

Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on theology and Christian education. Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis and Colin Crowder (eds). Eerdmans, 1996.

The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education. Walter Brueggemann. Fortress Press, 1989.

Biblical Theology and Christian Education. Randolph Crump Miller. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956.

A Theology of Christian Education. Lawrence O. Richards. Zondervan, 1975.

Education That is Christian. Lois E. LeBar. Victor Books, 1989.

A Biblical Theology of Missions. George W. Peters. Moody Press, 1972.

The Shape of Religious Instruction, James Michael Lee. Pflaum, Dayton, Ohio, 1971.