

Basic Information

TH 501 Semlink+: Theology Survey I | Fall 2019 | All Campuses

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin DeSpain, Adjunct Faculty
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Credit Hours: 3

This course occurs completely online with no scheduled classroom time. This course follows a weekly schedule that runs for 14 Weeks from Monday, September 9 – Monday, December 16, 2019. A week in this course begins on Tuesday and ends on Monday. You will have required activities due on certain days each week.

Course Information

Office Hours

Your instructor is available for email correspondence. If you have a question about the course, you can contact your instructor via email.

Technical Support

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary offers technical support during regular business hours. If you have a technical issue with your course, please email servicedesk@gordonconwell.edu.

Course Description

A study of theological method, revelation, inspiration, and canon of Scripture; existence and attributes of God; Trinity; creation and providence; human nature; original and actual sin.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives

- Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines.

Course Learning Objectives

This course is designed to give students a basic and growing competence in the area of theology through careful consideration of the Bible's teaching on core Christian doctrines, the church's formulation of those doctrines in history, and the expression of those doctrines in the varied contexts of contemporary society. In keeping with the institutional learning objective stated above, I intend that upon completing this course, you will:

1. Survey the biblical teaching on the doctrines covered in the course.
2. Articulate terms and issues important to theological discussion.

3. Analyze various theological positions critically and develop your own positions on the doctrines studied.
4. Articulate and value the implications of the doctrines studied for your own spiritual life, Christian character, and ministries.

Weekly Lessons

Over 14 weeks, you will cover the following topics and lessons:

- **Module A: Getting Started in Theology**
 - Lesson 1: Introduction to Theology (Week 1)
 - Lesson 2: Approaches to Theology, Part a (Week 2)
 - Lesson 3: Approaches to Theology, Part b (Week 3)
 - Lesson 4: A Key Idea for Theology (Week 4)
- **Module B: The Doctrine of Scripture**
 - Lesson 5: Scripture – Gathering and Learning (Week 5)
 - Lesson 6: Scripture – Interacting and Analyzing (Week 6)
 - Lesson 7: Scripture – Articulating and Valuing (Week 7)
- **Module C: The Doctrine of God and the Trinity**
 - Lesson 8: God/Trinity – Gathering and Learning (Week 8)
 - Lesson 9: God/Trinity – Interacting and Analyzing (Week 9)
 - Lesson 10: God/Trinity – Articulating and Valuing (Week 10)
- **Module D: The Doctrines of Creation and the Fall**
 - Lesson 11: Creation/Fall – Gathering and Learning (Week 11)
 - Lesson 12: Creation/Fall – Interacting and Analyzing (Week 12)
 - Lesson 13: Creation/Fall – Articulating and Valuing (Week 13)
- **Module E: Looking Ahead**
 - Lesson 14: Looking Ahead – Foundations for Christology (Week 14)

Weekly Workflow

This course runs for 14 weeks with each week running from Tuesday to Monday. The weekly workflow will differ from week to week. “Overview and Objectives” pages for each lesson will describe the workflow that you should follow each week.

Required Materials

Reading

Below is a list of required texts for this course. Follow the links below to check availability of eBook versions of these texts through the Digital Theological Library.

Elwell, Walter. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Baker, 2001. (ISBN: 978-0801020759)
<https://gordonconwell.on.worldcat.org/oclc/46998739>

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology, 3rd edition*. Baker, 2013. (ISBN: 978-0801036439; ASIN of e-book: B00EVS33NK). <https://gordonconwell.on.worldcat.org/oclc/816317880>

Fairbairn, Donald. *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers*. IVP, 2009. (ISBN: 978-0830838738; ASIN of e-book: B003F3FJMI).
<https://gordonconwell.on.worldcat.org/oclc/850934355>

McGrath, Alister. *Christian Theology: An Introduction, 6th edition*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. (ISBN: 978-1444335149; ASIN of e-book: B0089VT6A2).
<https://gordonconwell.on.worldcat.org/oclc/956649260>

Tennent, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology*. Zondervan, 2007. (ISBN 978-0310275114; ASIN of e-book: B000SIYT06).
<https://gordonconwell.on.worldcat.org/oclc/123119792>

"Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" and "Fairbairn's Statement on Scripture" (available in your course site)

Technology

Computer and Internet Connection

You will need regular access to a computer with high-speed internet and capable of downloading files and streaming multimedia presentations.

Software

You will need Microsoft Word or a comparable word processor installed on your computer.

Required Activities

To demonstrate achievement of course objectives, you will participate in various required activities. You will find detailed descriptions of these activities on your course site, but an overview of these requirements is given below:

Watch Lectures

You will begin each lesson by watching assigned lectures.

Read Required Texts

Once you have viewed the lectures, you will read the required texts as assigned.

Contribute to Discussions

As you progress through each Module, you will receive prompts to contribute to Discussions. You will contribute original posts to these Discussions and respond to peers as prompted. Discussions will encourage you to reflect and synthesize what you've been learning in the Module.

Create a Personal Glossary of Theological Terms

As you progress through each Module, you will write summaries for assigned theological terms based on articles you read in Elwell's *Evangelical Dictionary of Theological Terms*. By the end of the course, you will have written summaries for all terms and submitted a copy of the complete list of terms. You can use these summaries as a personal reference of theological terms, which will help you as you continue to study Theology.

Write a Key Idea Statement Paper

Throughout Module A, you will work on a Key Idea Statement Paper. This paper will help you relate various Christian doctrines to one another and identify where you stand in your theological beliefs.

Write Integrative Doctrinal Papers

By the end of Modules B, C, and D, you will write Integrative Doctrinal Papers – three papers in total. These papers will prompt you to bring together biblical teaching, Church creeds, statements and confessions and contemporary issues relating to the doctrine you encountered in that Module. You will analyze the interactions of the Bible, the Church and contemporary contexts in relation to the doctrine for that Module. You will also consider how your Key Idea for theology relates to the doctrine for that Module.

Grading

Your assignments are categorized and weighted for grading as follows

Course Assignment	% of grade
Introductory Discussion	0.8%
Course Discussions	11.2%
Personal Glossary of Theological Terms	10%
Key Idea Statement Paper	10%
Integrative Doctrinal Papers	60%
Reading and Lecture Viewing Report	8%

You must follow the criteria detailed in the Assignment Instructions posted on your course site. Grading will be based on your work's alignment with the performance criteria in the Assignment Instructions. You must also submit work by the "due by" dates listed in the Course Summary on the Syllabus tool of the course site. Any work submitted after these "due by" dates will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date unless you make arrangements with you instructor ahead of time.

The grading scale will be as follows:

A 95, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60

Course Policies

Time Zone

All activities in this course follow Eastern Time (UTC-05:00). Be attentive to the due dates listed in the course site so that you submit your work on time in Eastern Time.

Instructor Feedback

Your instructor will reply to email within 1-2 business days. He or she will give feedback on assignments within one week of submission and post grades and any additional comments in the course gradebook within two weeks of submission.

Writing Standards and Submitting Written Assignments

Papers must be double-spaced with 1" margins (side margins as well as top and bottom margins of each page), using Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font. Do not exceed page limits. Sources must be properly documented using notes and bibliography. Citations should be professionally formatted, meaning that it should adhere to either Turabian or APA style. Written assignments should be submitted as a Word or PDF file.

Violations of Academic Integrity

The seminary considers all breaches of personal and academic integrity to be serious offenses. As such, the seminary has zero tolerance for such behaviors. Cheating involves, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination. Duplication of course requirements involves the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructor. Plagiarism involves the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one's own instead of giving proper credit to the source (taken from the *Hamilton Student Handbook 2018-2019* – please be sure you understand your campus's most current Academic Integrity Policies).

Discussion Posts

When quoting from or paraphrasing course readings, provide the author's name and page(s) in parentheses. If quoting from other sources, provide appropriate documentation. Similarly, when referring to a specific lecture, identify it using the title of the segment.

Netiquette

Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette>.

Seminary Policies

You must be familiar with current seminary policies, which are in place for academic activities. Please refer to the Student Handbook for your home campus to familiarize yourself with policies pertinent to participating in academic activities at the seminary. Policies pertaining to this course would include those on Academic Integrity, Late Work, and Accessibility, among others.