

# TH502: Theology Survey II

Ryan M. Reeves – Spring 2019

Dr. Reeves' Contact Information:

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Dr. Reeves' TA is Kate Hendrickson: Email: [khendrickson@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:khendrickson@gordonconwell.edu)

NOTE: You should copy Kate at all times when writing Ryan about any academic matter. Aldo alone has authority to answer questions on behalf of Ryan for course matters, etc. If Ryan is unavailable for immediate response, Kate is often much faster to respond.

Schedule: **Jan 25-26, Feb 22-23, Mar 22-23**

Each session will begin Friday night from 6:30-9:30pm. Saturday will be 8:30am-4:30pm

Office Hours : I often am in the office and available for drop-in meetings before class on Friday afternoons. If you're on campus and I am in my office, do not hesitate to knock. Otherwise, please email Kate to make appointments.

## Course Objectives:

In keeping with Gordon-Conwell's mission statement, the professor intends that upon completing this course, students will:

1. Gain a mastery of biblical teaching on the doctrines covered in the course (article 1 of the mission statement).
2. Learn to think critically in analyzing various theological positions (article 2).
3. Develop their own positions on the doctrines studied and be capable of articulating and defending those positions and applying them to their own ministries (article 3).
4. Reflect on the implications of Christian doctrine for their own spiritual maturity, intimacy with Christ, character, and relationships inside and outside the church (article 4).
5. Consider the centrality of Christian doctrine for the development of a Christian and evangelical view of society (article 5).
6. Apply Christian doctrine to the church's tasks of missions, evangelism, discipleship, compassion, and justice (article 6).

## **Required Textbooks:**

Davis, John Jefferson. *Worship and the Reality of God: An Evangelical Theology of the Real Presence* Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010. (ISBN: 978-0830838844; ASIN of e-book: B0043M4HQO)

Hughes, Philip. *True Image: Christ as the Origin and Destiny of Man*, Eerdmans Publishing, 1989. (ISBN: 9780802803146)

Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Fifth Edition. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. (ISBN: 978-1444335149; ASIN of e-book: B0089VT6A2)

Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Zondervan, 2011. (ISBN: 978-0310286042; ASIN of e-book: B003U4UTDQ)

## **Course Assignments:**

### **Reading: 10% of overall grade.**

Your grade for this portion will be determined by the percentage you read. If your average of the total completed reading is 50% of the assigned reading, then you will receive an F on this portion of your grade. If your average is 80% you will receive a B-, and so on. Please consult the grading scale at the end of the syllabus. You are on your honor. Whatever percentage you say you completed will be worth 10% of your final grade.

You will read all of the following pages:

*Worship and Reality of God*: ALL

*True Image*: ALL

You will read only these chapters:

McGrath, *Christian Theology*: chapters 10-12, 14-18

Horton, *The Christian Faith*: chapters 14-29

### **Papers: 90% (30% each)**

Your paper will be graded not only on thoroughness (covering each topic sufficiently) but how you handle harder doctrines. The goal of these papers is not to articulate that you believe a doctrine but some of the reasons why you believe it. You will only be required to cite scripture, and as such you should cite scripture a great deal. However, this is not an exegesis paper, so do not spend a great deal of time unpacking each verse. Rather, like a confession you can simply point to the biblical sources for your comments. In a few cases—say predestination—you may want to explain why you take certain verses to one side of the issue or the other. It will not be enough, for example, to say you believe God is/is not sovereign over evil events and merely ignore the fact that this is a delicate issue in theology. Basic academic conventions must be maintained, though there is no need for a bibliography in this case, as the citations are only scripture.

### **Three (3) Theology Papers: 90% of total grade (30% each)**

You will write three papers between 10-12 pages in length EACH (total of 30-36 pages). You will in this assignment be writing out your theology in prose form (**not bullet points**). You must reflect on the Bible's teaching and the reading (from the assigned books above) on each of the doctrines covered in the course and must compose three doctrinal papers. The goal of the assignment is for each student to write his or her theological position on each of the doctrines.

#### **TAKE NOTE OF THESE DEADLINES:**

- **Paper 1:** Due 4 weeks after the 1st class:
  - *Person and Work of Christ*
  - **Due Feb 21 - email paper to khendrickson@gordonconwell.edu**
  - This gives you time to start your reading and begin writing.
- **Paper 2:** Due 4 weeks after the 2nd class:
  - *Holy Spirit and Salvation*
  - **Due Mar 21 - email paper to khendrickson@gordonconwell.edu**
- **Paper 3:** Due 4 weeks after the 3<sup>rd</sup> class:
  - *Church and Eschatology*
  - **Due April 22 - email paper to khendrickson@gordonconwell.edu**
- **Reading Report due May 1.**
  - Specify the percentage of the assigned reading you completed. This number will be your reading grade. You are on your honor.

Do not sleep on the assignments. I suggest working on your outlines FIRST (see below for details). Then sketch out your material under each heading with biblical references. Then slowly start to write the subject of each paper—even doing so out of sequence to when the paper is due. Lectures and readings can flesh out your writing for each paper, too, so do not forget to keep your notebook nearby when reading. **We will cover in more detail the strategies for writing the paper the first night of class.**

I will provide no official outline of how to breakdown the topics in your paper beyond the large sections above. You will need to determine how to lay out the material yourself. It is not good practice simply to make up your theology off the top of your head!

My suggestion, then, is to allow a confession to govern your approach. You should consider using a standard confession in your denominational tradition (or of your choice, if you are non-denominational) and analyze how they arrange the subjects. The confessions you may think about include:

Augsburg Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Scots Confession, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Methodist Articles of Religion, and the Philadelphia Baptist Confession.

Some of these may be found in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (vol. 3) or in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*. They are also available on-line or in denominational publications. This reading will help you interact with the history of your tradition.

## **PAPER FORMAT:**

The paper should be in Turabian format, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins on all sides, with a bibliography.

- **Cover pages and bibliographies DO NOT COUNT toward required page length.**
- Please proofread your work. Grammar and spelling mistakes are distracting.
- All written assignments should be submitted in either MS-Word or PDF format. (If you use a different word processor than MS-Word, please convert the file to PDF before submitting it.)
- **Note:** PDF format often means I cannot include comments in the margins, which may be frustrating for you when receiving the grade, as there will be nothing but the grade itself and a few comments. Word is far better for everyone.
- Since the paper is a personal statement of your theology, it should be written in the first person (e.g. 'I believe that...') but it is not a personal testimony paper.

### Criteria for Evaluation of Papers

#### I. Grammar and Style

- \* Is the text clean of spelling mistakes?
- \* Is the text punctuated correctly?
- \* Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar?
- \* Does the footnote/bibliographic apparatus follow Turabian?
- \* Is the paper written in clear, straight-forward style of academic prose?

#### II. Organization

- \* Is the subject of the paper clearly delimited? Is it significant, but still manageable?
- \* Does the subject correspond to what was assigned?
- \* Does the paper have a well-designed thesis statement and outline?
- \* Does the running text of the paper adhere to the outline, and are the larger divisions of the paper clearly signposted?
- \* Are the sentences and paragraphs of the text linked together clearly and in such a way that the thought of the student builds throughout the paper with continuity and coherence?

#### III. Clarity and Force of Argument

- \* Is a convincing case made to support the thesis statement?
- \* Is the evidence marshaled to support the argument used judiciously?
- \* Where the student provides exposition or summary, does she/he do so succinctly and objectively?
- \* Are opposing viewpoints treated fairly?
- \* Is there evidence of reflection on the subject matter?

#### IV. Research

- \* Does the paper draw well on biblical sources for its main evidence?
- \* Are the sources selected and used judiciously?
- \* Does the paper demonstrate sufficient depth and breadth of research, given the nature and level of the assignment?

Grading:

The point values listed above mean that the total number of points available for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be applied with cutoffs 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. A grade of A+ will be given very rarely, when the student's work is truly exceptional. (At Gordon-Conwell, a grade of A+ and a grade of A are both counted the same way in calculating the student's GPA. Thus, a GPA above 4.0 is not possible.)

Late work:

All late work will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date, unless arrangements are made ahead of time. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Work turned in later the due date will require that an extension be approved by me or Kate. If you anticipate a problem, contact either one of us as soon as possible.