

Systematic Theology Survey for Counseling Students 2ST501

Reformed Theological Seminary - Orlando
Fall Break, 2009
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PURPOSE

To understand and wrestle with the major doctrines of the Christian faith in light of the unique challenges and context of Christian counseling and soul care.

OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students will:

1. More fully value the importance of systematic theology
2. More articulately express the theological underpinnings and implications of Christian counseling and soul care.
3. More fully grasp the depth and scope of God's redemptive plan for the cosmos, and humanity in particular.

FORMAT

Teaching will include lecture, discussion, and video and visual aids where applicable.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Theology: The Basics (by Alistair McGrath)

Paperback: 248 pages

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell; 2 edition (November 9, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1405167548

ISBN-13: 978-1405167543

Not the Way Its Supposed To Be: A Breviary of Sin (by Cornelius Plantinga)

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (January 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802842186

ISBN-13: 978-0802842183

Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview (By Goheen and Bartholemew)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Baker Academic (November 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801031400

ISBN-13: 978-0801031403

The Divine Embrace (by Robert Webber)

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Baker Books (October 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801065550

ISBN-13: 978-0801065552

NOT REQUIRED BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Foundations of Soul Care, Eric Johnson. (especially helpful for essays)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **DISCUSSION:** Students will be present and participate actively throughout class presentations and discussions. Differing perspectives and questions will not be ignored, but are encouraged to be shared with the whole class. Discussion will be a major component of the class.
2. **THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK PAPER:** In *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be*, Plantinga talks about sin as a "vandalism of shalom." Write a five (5)-page double-spaced paper using Plantinga's book and relating the concepts to one of your clients, or one area of counseling interest or expertise (e.g. eating disorders, sexual addiction, depression, marital issues). Using the concepts in Plantinga's book (e.g. vandalism, perversion, pollution, corruption, masquerade, folly, addiction, attack, flight, etc.), describe this counseling issue not in DMS-IV terms, but in theological terms. (Example: a sex addict. What was God's intent for human sexuality? How did sin "pervert" it? How does this relate to your client? What is God's vision for restoration? Etc.) DUE: 2 weeks after the final day of class.
3. **ESSAYS:** Students will complete essays of a length of two-three (2-3) double-spaced pages each on the following:
 - a. In *Living at the Crossroads*, the authors lay out the parameters of a Christian worldview. In this essay, discuss what a worldview is, why it is important for Christian theology, how a worldview might impact psychology, and how this book impacted you.
 - b. In *The Divine Embrace*, Webber re-defines spirituality, attempting to root it back in a theological tradition. How does he do this? What are the dangers of bad spirituality? What are the implications of this book for counseling and soul care?

- c. Vocational Essay: The books in this course attempt to root you more solidly in the biblical story, with special attention to the importance of thinking theologically about your vocation. Many of the categories counselors use are derived from clinical/medical models, but it is important to start deeply rooted in the larger story of Christian Scripture and theology. Using quotes from all of the assigned course texts, use this essay to argue for the importance of *thinking theologically* about human sin, redemption, maturity (sanctification), and our eventual resurrection. How do you appropriate what you've learned in this course and the books into your self-identity or vocational identity as a *Christian* counselor? (Please note: the answer is NOT "counseling is Christian because I pray at the end of sessions.")
DUE: 4 weeks after last day of class.
4. **EXAM:** The final exam will consist of 1 essay and 25 concepts from the class that can be answered in short answer form (1-2 sentences max). DUE: 1 week after last day of class
- a. The 2-3 page essay asks the question: Why have some sought to minimize the role or importance of theology? What are the strengths/weaknesses of their arguments? Why do you think theology is important?
 - b. The 25 concepts will be taken from a list of exam possibilities below. I will NOT ask for a book definition. Put it in your own words.

POSSIBLE CONCEPTS: Image of God, Trinity, perichoresis, covenant, shalom, original sin, theology, transcendence, immanence, attributes of God, inerrancy, canon, Christ as prophet priest and king, predestination, the names of Jesus (e.g. Christ, Son of God, Son of Man), the Fall, common grace, covenant of works, covenant of grace, new covenant, Incarnation, election, reprobation, divinity and humanity of Christ, hypostatic union, justification, adoption, sanctification, TULIP, assurance of salvation, invisible vs. visible church, images or metaphors for the church, the cultural mandate, the Great Commission, importance of fellowship of believers, importance of prayer, importance of sacraments, amillennialism, premillennialism, new heavens and new earth, baptism, Lord's Supper, gifts of the Spirit, fruit of the Spirit, importance of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, church government, imputation, special revelation, general revelation.

READING ASSIGNMENTS and CLASS SCHEDULE

1. *Theology: The Basics* and *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be* should be read before the first day of class.
2. Other course texts are to be completed within the month after the last day of the course, as they relate directly to the essays.

Disclaimer: Because the course is ordinarily taught from 8am-12pm every week of the semester, we will not fulfill all of the in-class hours required. Therefore, it is imperative that you begin reading the books immediately (over the summer, perhaps), and working in advance. Because this is a 4-credit class, the work load is larger than normal. Budget your time accordingly.

GRADING SCALE

Listed below are the assignments that will determine your final course grade.

Class Participation and Attendance	25 points
Paper	25 points
Essays	25 points
Final Exam	25 points

A (97-100), A- (94-96), B+ (91-93), B (88-90), B- (86-87), C+ (83-85), C (80-82), C- (78-79), D+ (75-77), D (72-74), D- (70-71), F (below 70)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

If you should miss a class, you are expected to contact another student regarding the information covered.

All assignments will be due on the date specified in the syllabus. For each day an assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted from the score of the assignment. Budget your time accordingly given the intensive nature of the course. Papers may be emailed to me at chuck@citychurchsf.org.

Plagiarism/cheating will result in the failure of the course.