Course Overview

TEXTBOOKS:

*The Bible*
*The Westminster Confession of Faith*
Norman Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy*
Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*
Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change*
John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:
Lectures and readings will deal with three major topics:

A. RELIGION, REVELATION, AND SCRIPTURE
First, we study the basis of Systematic Theology in God's revelation of Himself. We discuss the capacity God has given us to know Him and thus the origin of religion. Then, we consider general and special revelation, inspiration, inerrancy and perspicuity of Scripture.

Required reading for Religion, Revelation and Scripture:

Syllabus material by D. Kelly on "Religious Language and the Canon." P. 17-ff
Norman Geisler, *Inerrancy*, pp. 3-354. You will specifically be tested on chapters 3-5, 7 of Geisler in your take home exam.

B. THEOLOGY PROPER
Here we study the essential nature of God, His knowability, His names and attributes (both communicable and incommunicable). We give special attention to the Scriptural basis and historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Next, we discuss the works of God in terms of His decrees, creation and providence.

Required reading for Theology Proper:
1. The Person of God

2. The Work of God:
   a. Election
      Bavinck, op.cit., 337-407.
   b. Creation
      Syllabus material by D. Kelly on "Creation."
You will specifically be tested on Bavinck, op.cit., chapters 1, 2, 4, 5-6, and Kelly, chapters 1-2 on your take home exam.

C. ANTHROPOLOGY
First, we study the exegetical basis and theological implications of man in his original state (his creation, nature, and relation to God), and man in his state of sin (fall and resultant condition). Second, we consider man in his state of salvation, with stress on the plan of salvation, and in particular, the covenant of grace.

Required reading for Anthropology:

*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 4, 6, 7, 9, 19.

PROCEDURE:
It is our intention to base the content of this survey of doctrine on the exegesis of Scripture. We will be making continual reference to the Reformed Tradition, and will deal with the Patristic heritage where this has particular relevance. Reference will be made to other theological traditions and periods as well. All through, we shall attempt to relate these truths to contemporary life, thought, and ministry.

REQUIREMENTS:
A. Do the required reading.

B. Learn the content conveyed in lectures.

C. Three exams:
   a. A mid-term exam covering what has been done up to that point. This exam should last between one and two hours. **Oct 22.**

   b. A final exam, covering what has been done since the mid-term. It should take about two hours, though you may have more time if you wish. **Exam week.**


D. A six to eight page essay, due before the fall break, on topics listed in this syllabus. **Nov 5.**
Term Paper for Systematic Theology I

This paper should be from 6-8 pages in length (typed and double-spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography. Do not include a string of long quotations. Make sure you (1) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides, and (2) interact with the material yourself so that you demonstrate that you have "thought about it theologically." (3) Have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay. (4) Use good grammar and write clearly.

Choose 1 out of 5 options.

(1) Has Revelation ceased with the close of the canon of scripture, or does it continue today? (Look at this matter exegetically, theologically and pastorally.)

(2) Prepare an exegetically-based theological paper on relevant sections of the first two chapters of Romans, with special reference to the knowledge of God held by pagans. What are the implications of this knowledge for societal morals, for final judgement, and for the missionary enterprise?

(3) Discuss the central Trinitarian truth of "circumincession" or perichoresis for "mutual indwelling"). What does this mean within the Godhead? What are its wider implications for the corporate life of Christians? Be sure to deal with scriptural passages. (You may wish to consult pp. 20-22 of your Systematic Theology I syllabus; T. F. Torrance's Trinitarian Faith and John Ziziolas' Being as Communion).

(4) Discuss the basic Biblical teaching on marriage as "one flesh" (refer to appropriate Biblical texts such as Genesis 2, Matthew 19, Ephesians 5, etc.). Particularly deal with this current problem: in light of what marriage was designed to be, why do so many of them go astray? Discuss why people are attracted to one another; then why problems in their marriage develop, and especially, how to deal with such problems in light of God's grace and purpose. You may wish to refer to such works as:

R.C. Sproul, The Intimate Marriage
L. Crabb, The Marriage Builder
E. Worthington, Counseling Before Marriage
D. and R. Friesen, Counseling and Marriage
H. Hendrix, Getting the Love You Want
(5) Compare and contrast the Christian view of God as Triune and the Islamic view of God as one (either unipersonal or an impersonal monad).