



FLOURISH
FUELING A MOVEMENT

GORDON CONWELL
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Flourish Courses Developed by Gordon-Conwell.

TH501 – Theology Survey I

Course Developer and Instructor: Rev. Mark Patterson, Ph.D.

Fall 2021 (September 7th – December 13th, 2021)

Required Web Meetings:

September 9th (8-9 PM ET/7-8 PM CST/5-6 PM PT)

September 30th (8-9 PM ET/7-8 PM CST/5-6 PM PT)

October 21st (8-9 PM ET/7-8 PM CST/5-6 PM PT)

November 11th (8-9 PM ET/7-8 PM CST/5-6 PM PT)

December 2nd (8-9 PM ET/7-8 PM CST/5-6 PM PT)

Contacts

Course Instructor: Rev. Mark Patterson (mark.patterson@sbcglobal.net), (805) 648-2737 ext. 225

- For phone calls, it would be best to schedule via email.

Flourish Registrar: registrar@flourishmovement.org

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Christian theology. It will cover five modules:

1. An introduction to theology looking at methods, approaches, sources, and foundations of theology.
2. The Bible and the doctrine of Scripture, looking first at inspiration and cannon and then at its authority and interpretation in theology.
3. The Doctrine of God and the Trinity through the insights of the early church and its labour to put into words the realities of God that had been revealed. And,
4. A study the doctrines of Creation and then the fall which will include creation and providence, human nature, original and actual sin.
5. A fifth module will end the course but will consist of your own study, research, and the completion of final projects/papers.

Course Objectives

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

- Survey the biblical teaching on the doctrines covered in the course.
- Understand terms and issues important to theological discussion.
- Analyze various theological positions critically and develop your own positions on the doctrines studied.
- Articulate and value the implications of the doctrines studied for your own spiritual life, Christian character, and ministries.

Course Modality

This course is offered online at flourishmovement.org. This online course has a fixed start and end date with scheduled weekly Lessons and associated Assignments and Activities. Although this course is primarily asynchronous (meaning that students usually do not have to be online at certain times to complete course requirements), students will need to adhere to weekly due dates. In addition, students will have to be present for occasional web meetings scheduled by the Instructor. Finally, students will be placed in groups of 4-6 students which will meet five times during the course. More information can be found within the course site.

Those taking the course for personal enrichment are strongly encouraged to stay on track with the schedule for credit-seeking students. Access to course content is not guaranteed after the course end date.

Course Schedule

The course is organized into eleven content weeks called “Lessons,” one holiday week, and two additional weeks focused on completing major summative assignments. Weeks begin on a Tuesday and end on a Monday.

Week(s)	Dates	Lesson Title
Module One – Starting Right: Appropriate Starting Places and Practices		

1	Sept. 7-13	Introduction: Theology and the Flourishing Church
2	Sept. 14-20	Foundations: Theology, Science, and Human Knowing
3	Sept. 21-27	Sources: Divine Revelation and Human Response
Module Two – Theology’s Authoritative Source: The Doctrine of Scripture		
4	Sept. 28-Oct. 4	Inspired Word: Doctrine of Inspiration and Canon
5	Oct. 5-11	Authoritative Word: Doctrine of Authority and Interpretation
Module Three – Theology’s Center: The Doctrine of God and the Trinity		
6	Oct. 12-18	Theology’s Center: Introduction to the Doctrine of God
7	Oct. 19-25	Heart of Christian Faith: The Son’s Relationship to the Father
8	Oct. 26-Nov. 1	Heart of the Church: The Trinity and its Implications
Module Four – Theology in the Real World: The Doctrines of Creation and Fall		
9	Nov. 2-8	The Source of All Things: The Triune God Who Creates
10	Nov. 9-15	Made and Maintained: The Doctrines of Creation and Providence
11	Nov. 16-22	Broken! Doctrine of Sin, Fallen Creation, and Hope of Redemption
Module Five – Final Projects and a Look Forward		
12	Nov. 23-29	Thanksgiving Break – No Coursework Due
13-14	Nov. 30-Dec. 13	Final Course Assignments Completion Period
	Anytime	Brief video introducing TH502 – Introduction to Theology II

Course Requirements

I. Readings

Students are required to obtain and read several books for this course. Books can be obtained through www.gctscharlottebookstore.com or any online retailer. Weekly reading assignments are posted in the course site. Students are required to complete the readings to pass the course and will submit a reading log showing dates and pages read at the end of the course attesting that they have completed this requirement.

You must complete all the reading prescribed below. This includes all of Fairbairn and approximately half of Horton, McGrath, and Tennent, approximately 63 short articles on theological terms from Elwell, and three other documents. This reading totals the

equivalent of about 1700 single-spaced pages. (McGrath is double-columned, so this total counts each page of McGrath as two pages). Horton, McGrath, and Tennent will be used in the second semester of this course (TH502) helping spread costs over two semesters.

Required Books

Students should purchase/obtain the following books and resources:

- “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.” (PDF provided in course site)
- *ECO Constitution*, pp. 2-8: *Essential Tenets* ([Link](#)). Or confession/statement of faith from your own theological tradition or denomination.
- Elwell, Walter, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd edition. Baker: 2001. (ISBN-13: 978-0801020759)
- Fairbairn, Donald, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers*. IVP, 2009. (ISBN-13: 978-0830838738)
- Fairbairn, Donald. “Statement on Scripture.” (PDF provided in course site)
- Horton, Michael, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Zondervan Academic, 2011. (ISBN-13: 978-0310286042)
- Kostenberger, Andreas J. and Kruger, Michael J., *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture’s Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Crossway, 2010. (ISBN-13: 978-1433501432)
- McGrath, Alister. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017. (ISBN-13: 978-1118869574)
- 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-13: 978-0310275114)
- Turabian, Kate, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th edition. University of Chicago Press, 2018. (ISBN-13: 978-0226430577)

Recommended Books

The following books are recommended by the Course Developer, but are not required for purchase:

- Kibbe, Michael, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0830851317
- Zissner, William, *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Non-Fiction*. Reprint Edition. Harper Perennial, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0060891541

PLEASE NOTE that in all assignments, the five books above will be cited by author's/editor's last name (Elwell, Fairbairn, Horton, McGarth, and Tennent). Assignments will give page numbers and chapter/section titles for clarity.

II. Lectures

Students are required to watch weekly lecture videos. These videos are posted in the course site. Students are required to watch all of the lecture videos to pass the course and will submit a lecture viewing log at the end of the course attesting that they have completed this requirement. There are approximately 60-75 minutes of video instruction each week.

III. Core Belief Papers

Students will write two *Core Belief Papers* this semester. These are intended to be brief (500 words) papers in which you reflect upon a broad question using the ideas and concepts you have learned to shape your thoughts and writing. These papers are to be more personal than academic but I would like to see how your thinking has been shaped and enlarged by your academic studies. Think of speaking to someone—a friend, someone who started attending your church, even a stranger—who asks you the question; what would you say to them? How would you answer? The first question (week 8) is “Who is God?” The second question (due at the end of the course) is “Who Are We?”

IV. Theological Terms Assignment

Through most weeks you must read the short articles in Elwell on the theological terms for that lesson. You must write summaries or definitions (one or two sentences) for each term so as to make a personal glossary of theological terms. Compose your glossary in a Word file and submit it at the end of the course.

V. Integrative Doctrinal Papers

In Lessons 5, 9, and 14, students must write an integrative doctrinal paper, for a total of three papers of 8-10 pages each. In each paper you do the following:

- Begin describing something of the issues involved and what you intend the paper to address. Some ideas might include an appropriate organizational scheme for the issues covered under the broad doctrine that is the subject of that module. How should a specific doctrine or area of doctrine be organized/ordered? How might it be organized/ordered with other doctrines within larger theology? How has the church wrestled with this/these ideas over time? Examples will be given at the assignments in lessons 5, 9, and 14.
- For each issue/doctrine, interact with the following:
 - Introduction: what do you intend to cover/present
 - Relevant biblical teaching: provide and interact with key/important biblical passages that speak to the area/doctrine(s) being addressed.
 - Important statements from the history of the Church (early creeds, Reformation confessions, ECO Essential Tenets (or other denominational doctrinal statements), or other historical materials described in the reading for the module).
 - Contemporary issues described in the required reading for the module. Additional sources may be used in addition to but not in replacement of, required reading.
 - For each issue/doctrine, state your own belief clearly.
 - Explain how your belief on the doctrine as a whole affects your own ministry and/or ministry area.

VI. Online Group Discussions (via Zoom)

The assignment for weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 11, is the participation in an online discussion around the doctrines discussed in that specific module with small (3-5 persons) group of other students. These groups will be assigned in the first week of class and group members will find a mutually convenient time to meet together for discussion and group activities. Discussion starting questions/statements will be given for each of these sessions. Prepare in the weeks before group discussions by considering concepts, questions/statements you may have, and preparing notes, references, etc. that will allow each member of the group a meaningful participation; and interaction within the group discussions. It is good to spend a few moments checking in with one another and praying for one another.

VII. Web Meetings with Course Instructor

Students will meet five times (weeks 1, 3, 7, 10, 12) with the Course Instructor as a group to discuss course content and student insights. This is a time for students to bring questions (from reading or lectures), discuss key ideas, and/or consider other related

issues. Dates and times are specified at the top of this syllabus. Information on how to connect are given under assignments for that week.

Assignment Formatting and Submission

Writing assignments should be submitted as either a Microsoft Word document or PDF file to the appropriate assignment in the course site (email submissions are not accepted).

All assignment file names should follow this convention:

FirstinitialLastname_AssignmentName_MMDDYY

example: JSmith_ResearchPaper_123119

All written assignments should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a 12-point standard font and **should follow the most recent edition of Turabian (Chicago Style for Students and Researchers) for paper formatting and citations.**

Course Grading

All course grading will be completed by the Course Instructor. **All assignments and activities must be completed to pass the course.**

Assignments and Weighting

Assignment	Weighting
Lesson Assignments	10% (class/small group participation, written summaries)
Core Belief Papers	20% (10% each)
Theological Terms Assignment	10%
Integrative Doctrinal Papers	60% (20% each)
Course Report (pass/fail) includes:	
Reading	Must complete to pass course.
Lecture Viewing	Must complete to pass course.
Small Groups	Must attend to pass course.
Class Web Sessions	Must attend to pass course.
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A	93-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		
		B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%	F	Below 60
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%		

Academic Standards

All submitted materials should be of graduate level academic quality and edited to reflect the student's best effort. Students should ensure that their submitted work is free from spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors. Students who are not confident that their writing meets graduate level standards or who are looking to improve their writing abilities are encouraged to enroll in one or both of the following courses through Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary:

- CT490 – Writing Skills Workshop. CT490 is a one-credit-hour online refresher course that introduces seminary students to essential grammar and composition skills necessary for pursuit of graduate-level writing.
- CT500 – Introduction to Theological Research and Writing. CT500 introduces students to graduate-level research and writing skills with specific attention to academic writing, theological research, integrating sources, understanding and avoiding plagiarism, and the proper citation of sources following the Turabian style manual.

To enroll in one of these courses, please contact charlotteadmissions@gordonconwell.edu.

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. 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. Plagiarism can also involve over-dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one's writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures.

Accommodations, Dropping the Course, and Extensions

Last updated: July 19, 2021

If you are a student in need of accommodation due to disability, please contact registrar@flourishmovement.org for guidelines and next steps. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Instructor of the documented accommodations at the beginning of the semester.

If you would like to drop the course, you are able to do so. The deadlines and amount you will be refunded or asked to pay depends on the type of student you are.

If you are a CLP2 student, you have until the start of the 7th week to drop the course for no additional charge. If you drop after the start of the 7th week, you will be asked to pay a \$150 drop fee. For the spring semester, the date to drop by, with no extra fee, would be October 25th.

If you are a Flourish or CLP1 student, the deadlines and refund percentages are below:

- September 17th – Last day to drop Fall course(s) for 100% refund
- October 1st – Last day to drop Fall course(s) for 80% refund
- October 22nd – Last day to drop Fall course(s) for 50% refund
- December 3rd – Last day to drop Fall course(s) with no refund

Once December 3rd passes, and you have not completed the coursework, you will be asked to take an "incomplete" for the course.

When you request to drop a class, you will be asked to fill out a form for our records with the name of the course, the reason you are dropping the course, and confirmation that you have paid the additional fee (if applicable) and notified your professor.

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the end date for the semester are made between the student and Instructor. However, course work to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester or term must be approved by Taylor Woods. ***An Extension Petition must be submitted to registrar@flourishmovement.org no later than the Friday before the last day of the course.*** Extensions are only available for those with exigent and unforeseen circumstances and are generally not granted for work, ministry, or educational overload. There will be a fee for extensions of \$40 that will need to be paid when the student submits their Extension Petition. To request an Extension Petition, please email Taylor Woods at registrar@flourishmovement.org with the name of the course and the deadline you and your instructor agreed upon.

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
– 2 Corinthians 3:18*

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