

*Issues in Baptist Life:
Calvinism and the Southern Baptist Convention*

THSE 8302

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New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Fall 2008*

Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description

This special event seminar is designed to involve students in the analysis and investigation of relevant theological issues pertinent to Baptist life in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular. Students will encounter and engage significant theological and ministerial issues through attendance and participation in a conference sponsored by the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry. The course is designed to promote the importance of theology and the integration of theology for Baptist ministry and church life.

This course offers an assessment of the resurgence of Calvinism in the Southern Baptist Convention, particularly with regard to soteriology. The course is built around the presentations at the John 3:16 Conference at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia, on November 6-7, and class members are required to attend the conference as a major part of the course content. Students will examine biblical and theological perspectives and hear presentations on this topic in order to articulate their own doctrinal perspective.

Addresses for Correspondence

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Required Texts

- Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation – Calvinism and Arminianism*. (Nashville: Randall House, 2002).
- Norman Geisler, *Chosen but Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election*, 2nd ed. Nashville: Bethany House, 2001.
- Jack Cottrell, ed., with Clark Pinnock, Robert Reymond, Thomas Talbott, and Bruce Ware, *Perspectives on Election: Five Views* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006).

Course Objectives and Core Competencies Addressed

As part of the larger Seminary goal of equipping effective leaders of healthy churches, and addressing the key competencies of Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, and Spiritual and Character Formation in the Seminary's curriculum, the objectives of this course are for the successful student:

- to achieve a greater understanding of the biblical and theological foundation for the doctrine of soteriology.
- to be able to identify and discuss the key thinkers and models regarding soteriology.
- to apply sound hermeneutics to interpret key biblical passages regarding soteriology..
- to decide one's own position with regard to the traditional five points of Calvinist soteriology.

Class Assignments

Textbook Critiques, 50 points each = 150 points.

Due: Picarilli 9/1/08; Geisler 10/1/08; Cottrell 11/1/08

Summarize the positions advocated in each of our required textbooks, with about a page for each chapter, plus your own evaluation of the book.

Conference Attendance, Due: 11/6-7/08, at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, GA

It is expected that all seminar students will attend the John 3:16 Conference at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, GA, sponsored by Jerry Vines Ministries and co-sponsored by the NOBTS Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry. In addition to hearing the paper presentations, there will be additional seminar meetings, hopefully including opportunity for interaction with some of the presenters. Students will need to provide their own travel and lodging arrangements during the conference. A discounted student fee of \$75 for the conference is available for students registered for his seminar. The \$75 fee includes two meals provided in the conference (dinner 11/6 and breakfast 11/7). To receive the group rate, students must pay the \$75 fee to an NOBTS representative by the first day of the conference, who will turn in these registrations as a group.

See <http://www.jerryvines.com/Page.bok?template=conference> for more details about the John 3:16 Conference.

Reflection Paper, 100 points. Due: 12/1/08

The student should reflect on the conference presentations and express his/her reflections on each of the presentations made at the conference, including new insights and new perspectives gained as a result of the conference presentations.

Position Paper, 50 points. Due: 12/1/08

Defend your own position on the five points of Calvinist soteriology, drawing from Scripture and the theological resources utilized in the class to defend your position. Your paper should be about 8-10 pages single spaced.

Participation in the Blackboard Blog, 50 points

Participation in the Blackboard discussions is required. At least five key questions will be posted for your discussion and interaction. Grades will be evaluated according to the biblical and theological support you are able to bring to your discussion, particularly reflecting what you have been reading in the three required texts. Although these are emotional issues, all discussions should be respectful and kind regarding the views of others.

How to Sign Up for Blackboard – You may begin participating in a class discussion through NOBTS Blackboard, beginning August 18, 2008. To sign up for blackboard, take the following steps:

Open your web browser to the NOBTS home page, <http://www.nobts.edu> Click on the Blackboard link in the left column. Choose the Create Account button on the left, enter in your information, then click Submit. Confirm your registration by clicking OK. Your personal NOBTS Blackboard home page should now appear. To enroll in a class, click on the Courses tab at the top of the page. Click the Browse Course Catalog link on the right-hand side of the page. Scroll down the page and click on the Enroll button beside “Calvinism in the SBC.” Enter the enrollment code: THEO6205 (Note: the enrollment code is case sensitive, so type it in exactly this way). Click OK when the confirmation page appears.

Course Policies

Participation in Class with preparation and attentiveness are crucial not only to your own success in the class, but to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution to make to the class. It is essential that we treat each other with Christian charity and kindness.

Absences are not allowed without special permission in this reduced time format course. Three times tardy or leaving early from class sessions equals one absence.

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—
an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below.

Late Work will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per office day).

Class Schedule

The Five Points of Dortian Calvinism	
When	Class Discussion Topic or Assignment
	Introduction to the Class
	Discussion Thread:
9/1	Picarilli text (<i>G, F, and FW</i>) summary and critique due
10/1	Geisler text (<i>C but F</i>) summary and critique due
11/1	Cottrell text (<i>PEFV</i>) summary and critique due
12/1	Reflection Paper and Position Paper Due

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