

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

THTH 8302 Doctrinal Foundations for Contemporary Ministry

Fall Trimester -- October 22-24, 2008

NOBTS 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.

Professor: Dr. Daniel Holcomb
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Room: HSC 211
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Time: W 1-9 pm
Th 8 am – 8 pm
F 8 am – 12 pm

Description

The seminar is designed to involve students in research and reflection on the theological foundations of the church and its ministry. Following an introductory overview of the types, tasks, and tools of theology, students will examine the historical development of Christian theology, giving particular attention to the formative influence of the early church, critical turning points in Christian thought, and the current status of Baptist theology. Persistent emphases of the seminar are 1) the indispensable role of sound theological reflection in shaping the life and ministry of the church, and 2) the need for creative integration of doctrine, experience, and praxis. The seminar also prepares students to engage in theological reflection in other professional doctoral seminars, the final project proposal, and the final project report.

Core Values Focused

Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Characteristic Excellence

Competencies Addressed

Christian Theological Heritage, Spiritual and Character Formation

Objectives

Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate

- foundational knowledge of the methods and tasks of Christian theology;
- awareness of the critical significance of sound theological reflection for the church;
- knowledge of major turning points in the history of Christian thought;
- appreciation of the Baptist theological heritage and major challenges it

- faces today;
- ability to develop strategies for teaching doctrine to contemporary believers;
- commitment to attentive reading, solid research, sound reasoning, and clear and substantive writing.

Required Textbooks

- Blount, Douglas K. and Joseph D. Wooddell, eds. *Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Grenz, Stanley J. and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 4th edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- McKim, Donald K. *Theological Turning Points: Major Issues in Christian Thought*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988.
- Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Williams, D.H. *Evangelicals and Tradition: The Formative Influence of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Seminar Assignments

Reading Schedule

Grenz & Olson, *Who Needs Theology?*; McGrath, *Christian Theology*; Williams, *Evangelicals and Tradition* should be read prior to the first meeting of the seminar (10/22/08). Blount & Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*; McKim, *Theological Turning Points*; Packer, *Knowing God* should be read by the last meeting of the seminar (10/24/08). A statement indicating completion of all seminar reading requirements should be attached to your final seminar paper.

Book Reviews

Prepare written reviews of Grenz & Olson (8 pages) and Williams (10-12 pages). The text of each review should be typewritten (Times New Roman 12pt) in an acceptable style, reflect serious study and analysis, and include the following sections:

- biographical sketch of author(s)
- author's purpose
- author's thesis or major arguments
- summary of contents
- significant teachings or insights
- strengths and weaknesses
- contributions to ministerial formation
- five questions related to the book for seminar discussion

The reviews are due the first day of the seminar (10/22/08). The third review (McKim, *Theological Turning Points*) is due the second day of the seminar (10/23/08).

Reflection Paper

Using J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* as your primary source, write a paper (8-10 pages) reflecting upon the various levels or manifestations of knowing God, ranging from intensively theoretical modes to the most intimate and personal awareness. How does Holy Scripture address the question of knowing God? Is it possible to develop a theological vision that is at once tough minded and acutely sensitive to the presence of God? How does Holy Scripture correlate knowledge, truth, worship, love, and service? The paper is due on 11/6/08.

Final Project

The final project is a paper (18-20 pages) addressing the current status of and challenges confronting Baptist theology. Use Blount & Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* as the primary (but not only) source for the study. The first section of the paper should be an overview and analysis of the book. The second section should address the major challenges confronting Baptist theology today. The third section should set forth what you believe to be the essential DNA of Baptists, what constitutes their distinctive identity and witness. The final section should propose at least in introductory form a program of instruction in Baptist heritage for your congregation. The paper is due 11/19/08.

Seminar Assignment Values

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| • Reading Assignment | 10% |
| • Seminar Discussions | 10% |
| • Book Reviews | 45% [15% each] |
| • Reflection Paper | 15% |
| • Final Project | 20% |