Systematic Theology Survey for Counseling Students  
2ST501

Reformed Theological Seminary - Orlando  
Fall 2013 and December 2013  
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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.
4. More confidently engage with various counseling theories and understand their theological consequences.

FORMAT

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

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (by Cornelius Plantinga)
- *Delighting in the Trinity* (by Michael Reeves)
- *The Household of God* (by Leslie Newbigin) -  
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. **WEEKLY REFLECTION PAPERS**: Students will write .5-1 page reflections on how the topics discussed in class impacts the way they see counseling or how they would integrate a proper understanding of each topic into their theoretical perspective. This is simply meant to have each student engage the various theological concepts from the perspective of counseling. Students should not spend hours on this, only engage it thoughtfully.

3. **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: January 31.**

4. **READING**: Students are asked to engage in various topics through this class. Each student will be asked to turn in a reading report stating what percentage of the readings they have read **with reasonable care**. This means actually reading it. Turn in with your Integration Paper. There may be other readings assigned that would be helpful with class. **DUE: Jan 31**

5. **THEOLOGICAL INTEGRATION PAPER**: Students choose one psychological theory of interest and write an 8-10 page critique of that theory using theological categories. The paper should be written in three parts:

   - **Part 1**: Explain the theory, positively explaining its own theological categories from its own world view (i.e., its view of man, sinfulness, salvation, *telos*/purpose)
   - **Part 2**: Critique the theory using the biblical and theological categories we’ve discussed in the class. Here you would not only critique some of the points from the previous part, but you could also bring up other parts of the theory that our biblical and theological categories critique.
   - **Part 3**: Finally, here you will talk about the ways in which you would or wouldn’t use this theory in your own clinical work. You may find it very useful, or at least many parts. You may also find it entirely unhelpful. The goal is for you to
understand what integration can look like practically using a theory you have an interest in. 
This is to be a research paper and should be treated as such. Feel free to use resources outside the class works as you see fit. DUE: Jan 31

READING ASSIGNMENTS and CLASS SCHEDULE

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Please begin reading the required texts prior to the December course. All work is due by January 31, so get started as soon as possible.

**GRADING SCALE**

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

- Class Participation and Attendance: 10 points
- Reflection Papers: 10 Points
- Paper: 25 points
- Reading Report: 30 points
- Integration Paper: 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.

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