I. Course Description

**Systematic Theology 3: Kingdom of God.** This course will examine in detail the doctrine of salvation (soteriology), the Church (ecclesiology), and the four last things (death, judgment, heaven and hell).

II. Course Objectives

1. Learn and value the biblical, historical, and theological foundations for an evangelical understanding of the church, salvation, and our Christian hope.

2. Sharpen ability to recognize and correct heresies that challenge each of these doctrines.

3. Appreciate competing perspectives and argue for a position on such contemporary controversies as: the meaning and value of church membership, the meaning and use of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the role of women in pastoral ministry, Calvinist vs. Arminian perspectives on salvation, the new perspective on Paul, the definition and practice of forgiveness, the possibility of salvation for those who have never heard the gospel, the millennium, the intermediate state, and hell.

4. Establish a theological foundation for faithful ministry in the church of Jesus Christ.

III. Textbooks


Additional reading on the Internet (also on reserve at the library):


The Hoch Bookroom (HBR) sells new copies of course textbooks and supplementary texts at costs comparative to online vendors. The HBR is committed to providing textbooks through drop/add week of each semester. After drop/add week it is not guaranteed that all textbooks will remain in stock due to the nature of inventory returns. In addition to purchasing books during store hours, students can call the HBR to order books by phone and pay with a credit card. Books can be shipped to the student for a fee or can be picked up from the front desk of the GRTS Faculty Center. HBR hours and contact information are posted online at [https://www.cornerstone.edu/grts-hoch-bookroom](https://www.cornerstone.edu/grts-hoch-bookroom).

### IV. Student Responsibilities

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<tr>
<th>Theological Critique on Last Things</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Critique on the Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Critique on Salvation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgiveness Case Study</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
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The quality of the student’s classroom participation and ability to complete the assigned reading may raise or lower his final grade. Per the seminary catalogue, students may **miss one class period without penalty**, but each additional absence will result in one letter grade reduction per absence. It is the specific policy of this professor and generally of the institution to not grant incompletes for coursework.

**Papers and Projects** in Bible and Theology courses should be formatted and sources documented according to the GRTS Guideline for Papers (see sample footnotes and bibliography on p. 10-13). This guideline is based on the Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style and the SBL Handbook of Style.

**Copyright Violation and Plagiarism**: Copyright violation and plagiarism have serious ramifications for Cornerstone/GRTS students, both legally and ethically. Unauthorized copying or use of copyrighted materials, including downloaded files of various kinds, can result in criminal charges and fines. Plagiarizing another’s words or ideas (passing them off as your own) can result in loss of grade or failure. For a fuller explanation of these issues or of CU’s copyright policy, see Miller Library’s website (under Library Services menu)—“Copyright, Fair Use, & Plagiarism”: http://library.cornerstone.edu/content.php?pid=125720&sid=1079827

**Email Communication**: Email is the official means for communication with every enrolled student. Students are expected to receive and read those communications in a timely fashion. Since the seminary will send official communications to enrolled students by email using their Cornerstone University email addresses (i.e., first.last@cornerstone.edu), students are expected to check their official email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of seminary communications.

Students can access their Cornerstone University email account as follows:
- Go to gmail.cornerstone.edu
- Enter CU username (e.g., n0236522) and password
  Students can forward or IMAP their “@cornerstone.edu” email to a preferred address as follows:
  - Log into CU email
  - Select “Settings” in the upper right hand corner
  - Select “Forwarding and POP/IMAP”
  - Follow the on-screen instructions
  Students are responsible for any consequences resulting from their failure to check their email on a regular basis for official seminary communications.

**Disability accommodation**: the University will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The purpose of accommodation is to provide equal access to educational opportunities to students affected by disabilities, and the university does not intend that the standards be altered, nor that the essential elements of programs or courses be changed. Students having documented disabilities may apply for
accommodations through Student Disability Services (SDS), which is part of the Cornerstone University Learning Center located in Miller Hall on the main campus.

In the event that students have questions regarding whether they are eligible for accommodations, how they might provide appropriate documentation of disabilities, or how they might handle a disagreement with a professor over questions of accommodation, the Director of Academic Support should be contacted immediately at (616) 222-1596 or via email at learningcenter@cornerstone.edu. Further information about applying for and utilizing accommodations is provided in the Student Handbook and on the university’s website.

Inclusive language: as noted in the GRTS academic catalog, writing and discussion should reflect the GRTS policy on inclusive language when referring to other people, regardless of their gender, nationality, culture, social class or religion.

Confidentiality and Disclosure: Information shared by a student with a faculty or staff member in individual settings will remain confidential, except under the following conditions:

- There has been serious harm or threat of harm to self or others
- There is reasonable suspicion of abuse of a child, elder or vulnerable person.
- There is a court order mandating disclosure of information.
- There is a dispute between a student and faculty/staff member and disclosure is necessary for resolution.
- The faculty or staff member requests supervisory consultation with CU administration.

Student Course Evaluation: In the last two weeks of each resident course, all students are expected to complete a course evaluation (IDEA Form). This paper-based assessment form will be distributed and completed in class. In Ministry Residency, Counseling Practicum and Counseling Internships, and for all online courses, student evaluations will be completed within Moodle. These assessments provide an opportunity for students to offer feedback to professors on the quality of the learning experience, feedback that informs future offerings of the course. More information about these evaluation processes will be provided late in the given semester.

V. About the Assignments

Paper submissions: All papers must be submitted via Moodle and hard copy by the beginning of class on the day that they are due.

1. Forgiveness Case Study

Instructions will be given in class. Submit your paper via Moodle and hard copy by the beginning of class on the date listed in the course schedule.
2. Theological Critique

Students must write two critiques that evaluate the doctrinal statement of their local church on the specific topics covered in this course. Do not critique the entire statement, but only the parts that pertain respectively to Eschatology, Ecclesiology, and Soteriology. Each paper must be submitted via email or hard copy by the date noted on the course schedule. It should be 4-5 pages of double-spaced type and include the following components:

a. Give a brief history of your church and denomination (1/2-1 page). State whether or not you agree with your church’s denominational or theological stance. If not, describe your theological position so I know the perspective you are critiquing the statement from. This section can be the same for each of your critiques.

b. State verbatim the section of your church’s confession that addresses the doctrine in question. This section should be set off (e.g., indented) and single-spaced. It will not count toward your total page count.

c. Provide a commentary and critique of this material (2-3 pages).

1) Consider the following questions as prompts to your thinking: What does the confession say well? What is incorrect? What is missing or needs further development? What is vague or imprecise? What statements need tightening?

2) State what errors or heresies the confession fails to exclude. The confession may have been fine when it was written, but what should be added to guard against contemporary errors?

3) What factors lie behind these issues? Are there historical, denominational, cultural, or other reasons why it says what it says? As far as you can tell, what theological tradition or traditions would affirm or deny your church’s statement?

d. End the paper with a revised version of your church’s confession (1/2-1 page). In other words, based on your critique and commentary, provide a rewritten theological statement that addresses the concerns surfaced in your analysis. Make sure that your revised statement protects against the errors discussed in class (or explain where you disagree with the class presentation) and supplies a solid foundation for Christian ministry. If your church’s statement is brief, you may need to add a lot.

VI. Grading Scale

A: 100-96       B+: 92-90       C+: 81-78       D+: 69-67       F: 59 & below
A-: 95-93       B: 89-86        C: 77-74        D: 66-64
B-: 85-82       C-: 73-70       D-: 63-60
**VII. Course Schedule**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th><strong>Topic &amp; Assignment</strong></th>
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| Sept. 15 | **Last Things**  
*Covenant vs. Dispensational Theology*                                    |
| Sept. 22 | **Millennium**  
*Bock, ed., Three Views on the Millennium*                                 |
| Sept. 29 | **Death/Intermediate State/Judgment/Hell/New Creation**  
*Horton, p. 906-90*  
*Wittmer, Don’t Stop Believing, chapter 9*                                 |
| Oct. 6   | **No class.** Attend the New Creation Talking Points  
*Attend the New Creation Talking Points on Wednesday morning, Oct. 7, or listen to the podcasts afterward.* |
| Oct. 13  | **Church**  
*Sacraments or Ordinances?*  
*On reserve: Calvin, Institutes 4.14*  
*Horton, p. 763-87*  
*Baptism*  
*Armstrong, ed., Four Views on Baptism*                                    |
| Oct. 20  | **Lord’s Supper**  
*Armstrong, ed., Four Views on the Lord’s Supper*  
**Due: Theological Critique on Eschatology**                                |
| Oct. 27  | **Organization and Leadership**  
*Horton, p. 872-903*  
**Gender and Ministry**  
*Beck and Blomberg, Two Views on Women in Ministry**                     |
| Nov. 3   | **Salvation**  
*Grace*  
*Demarest, p. 25-96*  
*On reserve: Augustine, On Nature and Grace*  
**Due: Forgiveness Case Study**                                            |
Nov. 10  

*Inclusivism/Exclusivism*  
Wittmer, *Don’t Stop Believing*, chapter 8

*Election and Calling*  
Demarest, p. 97-143, 203-34

Nov. 17  

*Conversion: Faith and Repentance*  
Demarest, p. 235-75  
Wittmer, *Don’t Stop Believing*, chapter 2

*Regeneration/Adoption*  
Demarest, p. 277-309

*Union with Christ*  
Demarest, p. 313-44  
**Due:** Theological Critique on the Church

Nov. 24  

*Nature and Mission of the Church*  
Horton, p. 711-50, 828-71  
Wittmer lecture on Moodle  
Jim Samra, lecture on the church

Dec. 1  

*Justification*  
Demarest, p. 345-82  
Wittmer, *Don’t Stop Believing*, chapter 3  

*New Perspective on Paul*  
On reserve: N. T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul”  
Horton, p. 630-42

Dec. 8  

*Sanctification*  
Demarest, p. 385-429

*Perseverance/Doubt*  
Demarest, p. 431-63

*Glorification*  
Demarest, p. 467-81
Dec. 15  Final Examination
Dec. 18, noon  Due: Theological Critique on Salvation
VIII. Ecclesiology Bibliography

A. Nature of the Church


**B. Worship**


**C. Gender Roles in Church**


**D. Sacraments**


**IX. Soteriology Bibliography**

**A. Predestination**


Olson, Roger E. *Against Calvinism.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.


**B. Justification**


**C. New Perspective on Paul**


D. Regeneration/Conversion


E. Union with Christ


F. Sanctification


G. Perseverance/Doubt


**H. Exclusivism/Inclusivism/Universalism**


**I. Lordship Salvation**


**X. Eschatology Bibliography**

**A. General**


**B. Amillennialism/Premillennialism/Postmillennialism**


**C. Tribulation**


Karleen, Paul S. *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church: Is It Biblical?* Langhorne, PA:


Stanton, Gerald B. *Kept from the Hour.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956.


**D. Dispensationalism**


**E. Death**


**F. Hell**


**G. The Final State**


