

# ACTS

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## SEMINARIES

### **THS 571: Theology of the Believer's Church Tradition: Fall 2017**

*This syllabus is subject to slight alteration before the first day of class. It is not the final version.*

**Instructor: Archie J. Spencer, ThD**

**TA: TBA**

**Date: Wed. Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>–Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Credit: 3 hours**

**In Class and Live Stream Format**

#### **I. Course Description**

This course introduces the student to the historical and systematic-theological features of the Believer's Church Tradition, which is understood as a central conception in North American Evangelicalism. The course will begin with a historical overview, which will include a study of the nature and necessity of doing theology in the contemporary context. Considerable attention will be given to the authority of God's self-disclosure in Scripture and the importance of a proper hermeneutic approach to the same. The subject matter then shifts to those areas of importance to the believer's church tradition such as personal salvation, the nature and mission of the church, and the practice of ministry within the church and to the world.

#### **II. Aims**

This course aims to equip the student with:

- An appreciation for and understanding of the particular historical and systematic- theological perspective of the Evangelically centered Believer's Church Tradition and its differences/relationship with other theological traditions within historic Christianity.
- An ability to articulate the historic doctrine of Scripture as the sole authority for the Christian in contrast to other non-evangelical views. Inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy will form the center of this discussion.
- An ability to formulate a world-view that is thoroughly informed by the Believer's Church Tradition so that thought, language and the Christian life come into conformity with the Scriptures.
- A greater appreciation for and understanding of the classic doctrines of salvation, the church and Christian ministry so that the student's local church might benefit from their understanding.

#### **III. Texts**

Buschart, David. *Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Invitation to Theological Hospitality*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2006.

Bloesch, D. *Holy Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994, reprint 2009. (Any edition of this book will do)

## **IV. Requirements**

### ***A. Reading and reviews: Value 30% (15% per review)***

Both texts and the class notes are required reading as assigned. The course requires a minimum of 1000 pages of text readings plus further research for the paper. Much of your learning in this course will depend upon careful disciplined reading of assigned texts. **A four-page review should be submitted in the appropriate file on the *mycourses* website, where there is a drop box for each review, indeed for all assignments in this course. The first four-page review on Buschart's book is due on the 3rd day of class, September 20<sup>th</sup>. The second 4-page review, on Bloesch, is due on October 27<sup>th</sup>. **All assignments should be submitted online in the drop box provided.** Please check my *Syllabus Supplement* for details on how to do a book review for my class. A grading template for the reviews will be posted on the My-Courses site ahead of the due dates.**

### ***B. Research Paper: Value 45%***

**Students**, will produce a research paper of not less than 10 and not more than 12 pages in length. It is to be typed, double-spaced with a 10-12 pt. font (Times New Roman). All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition or later. Check the *Syllabus Supplement* for more details on research paper requirements. Students should consult a minimum of 8 credible sources representing an extra 400 plus pages of reading. **The paper is due by midnight November 19<sup>th</sup>**, and it should be submitted in electronic, Word, format on the MyCourses site in the drop box marked "Research Paper." Topics for the research paper are to be negotiated with the professor by email.

### ***C. Final Reflection Paper: Value 25%***

This assignment is designed to give the student an opportunity to interact with the lectures, readings and class discussions in relation to their own Christian experience. The student is expected to draw on these sources, not just personal experiences, in answering three questions.

1. How does my Christian experience, (i.e. upbringing, church experience and/or cultural experience), relate to the Believer's Church Tradition as taught in this course?
2. In what ways can the various aspects of the Believer's Church Tradition help me in relation to my present church context and Christian experience?
3. What are the issues that I find most difficult to understand and/or to reconcile with my own experience and church context?

Specific references to the doctrinal issues discussed are expected. The goal of this assignment is to help the student come to grips with the theological significance of beliefs and practices that may have previously been taken for granted or not really thought through theologically. It should be 10 to 12 pages in length and written in the same format as outlined above. This assignment is **due December 5<sup>th</sup>**, and ***must be submitted on-line as suggested above.***

These assignment grades will be returned to you by means of a grade template with comments. ***The class notes*** will be available for purchase by the first week of term at the TWU book store.

**Students who are doing this course exclusively on-line** should also purchase these notes before the first week of class. From time to time audio lectures will also be posted in the course on-line platform. These must be downloaded and read in conjunction with the readings from the texts and lecture notes. Students should limit themselves to working through one unit of lecture notes per week (on average). *Use the course outline below as your guide. Students should be able to discern what the appropriate readings are in relation to the topics covered in each session. It is up to you to figure this out, though it is fairly self-evident.* It does not have to be an exact match between my notes, audio lectures, and text readings. In fact there will often be some differences, but this will not affect the over all topics to be covered unduly. See the outline below for all the details on when to read/listen to each resource.

## **V. Contacting the Instructor**

I will be available during office hours at ACTS as noted on my office door. Email address: [archie.spencer@twu.ca](mailto:archie.spencer@twu.ca) You may phone the office at NBS and leave a message: ph. 888-7592, local 3858 If all else fails leave a note under my door, or at NBS. For further information on school closure policy and contact information please see my *Syllabus Supplement to be posted on MyCourses*. I will be posting regular office hours and a sign-up sheet so do feel free to come by and sign up if you need to see me. **You are also free to drop by and see if I can see you on the spot but my availability will depend on my schedule so I hope you understand if sometimes I have to say I am unavailable at the moment.** Email is really the best way to get a message to me.

## **VI. Course Outline**

There are a total 29 topics. Sometimes these will be covered together with others and sometimes as separate lectures. This material will all be covered in the class lectures are also available through on-line video lectures, which can be viewed from my web site at [www.chriatiantheology.ca](http://www.chriatiantheology.ca). Go to the tab marked THS 571. Some supplementary audio lectures will be provided as well including several from Karl Barth's *Evangelical Theology* series.

**There will be No Class October 25<sup>th</sup>, Due to reading week.**

### **Module I: Historical-Theological Definition of the Believers Church Tradition**

<b>Session I:</b>	The Believers Church Tradition: Towards a Working Definition
<b>Session II:</b>	Believers Church Themes in the Early Church: New Testament to 4 <sup>th</sup> Century
<b>Session III:</b>	Believers Church Themes in the Early Church - Continued
<b>Session IV:</b>	Believers Church Themes in Medieval Christianity
<b>Session V:</b>	The Reformation as Precursor to the Believers Church Tradition (Video)
<b>Session VI:</b>	The Reformation Doctrine of Scripture
<b>Session VII:</b>	The Reformation Understanding of Justification
<b>Session VIII:</b>	The Reformation Understanding of Church
<b>Session IX:</b>	The Radical Reformation and Believers Church Tradition
<b>Session X:</b>	The Great Awakening and the Rise of Believers Church Tradition

## **Module II: Theological Features of the Believers Church Tradition**

- Session XI:** The Great Awakening in America  
**Session XII:** The “Consolidation” of Believer’s Church Theology in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Session XIII:** The Authority of Scripture in the Believer’s Church Tradition  
**Session XIV:** Revelation; A Believer’s Church Approach
- Session XV:** Inspiration of Scripture  
**Session XVI:** Inerrancy of Scripture  
**Session XVII:** Infallibility of Scripture  
**Session XVIII:** The Hermeneutical Question in the Believer’s Church Tradition
- Session XIX:** The Atonement in the Believer’s Church Tradition  
**Session XX:** Justification by Faith in the Believer’s Church Tradition

## **Module III: Church and Ministry in the Believers Church Tradition**

- Session XXI:** Sanctification: The Christian Life in the Believer’s Church Tradition  
**Session XXII:** The Church: The Nature of God’s Chosen People
- Session XXIII:** The Church as God’s Chosen People  
**Session XXIV:** The Church as God’s Holy Spirit-Gifted People
- Session XXV:** The Church as God’s People Sent on a Mission  
**Session XXVI:** The Church as God’s People Led  
**Session XXVII:** The Believer’s Church in Relation to the World
- Session XXVIII:** The Nature of Ministry in the Believer’s Church Tradition  
**Session XXIX:** Theology as a Discipline in the Believer’s Church Tradition

### **Grading Scale**

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Barely Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

## **Important Academic Notes Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>**

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called "I forgot my password." When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

### **Campus Closure**

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

**Paper Formatting:** *Students need to adhere to Turabian 8<sup>th</sup> ed. format except in counseling courses, for which APA format is used.*

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page [www.twu.ca/library](http://www.twu.ca/library)) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or [www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/). Note that in Ref Works the available formatting styles are those of Turabin (Notes), 6<sup>th</sup> edition, and APA (American Psychological Association), 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **Academic Honesty**

A fundamental expectation, grounded in biblical ethics, for anyone involved in academic work at ACTS is that he/she practice academic honesty. Students must become familiar with, and adhere to, the principles and requirements associated with academic honesty. Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage ([www.acts.twu.ca](http://www.acts.twu.ca)) at the following link: [www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html](http://www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html).