Grace Communion Seminary

Academic Catalog and Student Handbook

January 2016 to August 2016

Grace Communion Seminary
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Glendora, CA 91740-0730

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I. Introduction to the Seminary

A. Message from the President

Grace Communion Seminary is committed to Paul’s vision of “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” in order to “build up the body of Christ.” With this goal in mind, we strive to serve laypersons, pastors and those seeking to discern their calling, providing them quality educational opportunities in the areas of biblical studies, theology and ministry.

The challenges of Christian ministry are great. But when people of faith work together to seek understanding of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ according to Scripture in a disciplined and sustained way that our courses provide, we have seen evidence of God’s faithfulness to grow and mature his people and enable them to share more fully, peacefully and joyfully in Christ’s continuing ministry. Whether through our continuing education series of master’s level courses or in one of our two master’s degree programs, all are designed to nurture our faith, hope and love for God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

This Christ-centered and Trinitarian foundation undergirds and strengthens all our endeavors to live and share the gospel in our churches and surrounding communities. It binds together head and heart, understanding and worship, love for God and love for neighbor. May our Triune God lead you as you consider becoming a part of GCS.

Gary W. Deddo, Ph.D.

B. GCS Purpose and Plan

1. Mission statement

“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.” We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.
2. Purpose

Grace Communion Seminary serves the needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian service who want to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to more effectively serve in the Incarnational life of the church in Jesus Christ.

Grace is the essence of our lives. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ reveals God to us, grants us life in him, leads us in forgiving and being forgiven, and gives us salvation. Our Triune God and his grace and love through Jesus Christ is the center of our theology.

Communion defines the relationship we have with God, Jesus, and one another. The communion of the Holy Spirit binds us with Jesus who is the head of the church, enlivens God’s love in our hearts, and unites us as followers of Jesus Christ. We live in inseparable unity in Christ in the perpetual effects of his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost.

Seminary describes the scope of our educational goal. We are committed to enabling pastoral ministry in the universal church that effectively shares the love of the Father with the world. We teach from a perspective of Incarnational Trinitarian theology. (See pages 10-11 for details.)


3. Educational philosophy

GCS provides holistic Christian education for laity and ministry to develop biblical and theological understanding for pastoral leadership by means of directed readings, online lectures, written assignments, practical application experiences, and interaction with colleagues and professors.

We see as fundamental to the accomplishment of these purposes a
profound dedication to the search for and dissemination of truth. We believe, therefore, that the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members should be committed to and supported in their pursuit of knowledge and truth.

4. Goals

Our institutional goals express our intent to educate pastors and other Christian leaders in graduate-level programs centered in Incarnational Trinitarian faith:

a) Serve graduate-level educational needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian ministry who seek to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to serve more effectively in the Incarnational life of the church in Jesus Christ.

b) Provide formal programs of instruction and other learning opportunities that foster intellectual curiosity, facilitate the work of the Spirit in transforming the student, arouse the social and moral conscience of its students, and cultivate in them a willingness to respond to God as he leads them to address the global needs of humanity.

c) Provide seminary education that conveys the Trinitarian nature of God in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

d) Provide courses and programs that meet traditional academic standards, but are designed to suit the needs of bivocational pastors who can study only on a part-time basis, and also allow fulltime students to progress at a traditional pace.

5. Educational objectives

Our institutional objectives further describe the scope of our distance education programs:

a) Provide quality distance education programs for graduate
students in biblical, theological, historical, ministerial, and pastoral studies that are centered in Incarnational Trinitarian theology. Our goal is that our overall course completion rate is at least 90 percent, and of the students and alumni who complete our surveys, at least 90 percent say that they would recommend these studies to a friend.

b) Provide credentialed faculty members who have experience in teaching and in ministry-related areas. Our goal is that at least 75 percent of our faculty have doctorates in a field relevant to the courses they teach. Of those who do not have a doctorate, at least 67 percent will have more than one master’s degree, with training in fields relevant to the courses they teach; the remaining third may have only one master’s, but with exceptional expertise for the course they teach.

c) Provide adequate administrative staff to facilitate direction and coordination of student services, faculty development, financial accountability, and technological support. Our goal is that we have at least 40 hours per week of support staff for every 30 full-time-equivalent students.

d) Provide structured graduate-level programs in a semester-long format that is readily accessible to clergy and others engaged in Christian ministry in a flexible manner through technologically sound, cost-effective educational systems. Our goal is that we offer two master’s degrees; accessibility will be demonstrated by at least 90 enrollments per year.

e) Provide holistic Christian education through online courses by means of directed readings, online lectures, written assignments, practical application experiences, examinations, and interaction with peers and professors. Our goal is that we offer at least 20 courses each year.

f) Provide a curriculum that enables students to meet personal goals in higher education, from taking courses of their choice in the Master’s Level Continuing Education Courses, to a master’s
degree program. Our goal is that all of our courses, with the exception of capstone courses, may be taken either for continuing education, or may be applied toward a master’s degree.

g) Provide courses that give students a good foundation in biblical studies, theology, church history, and Christian ministry, suitable for pastoral work or for further study. One key indicator for this is student performance on the summative exam.

h) Provide effective interactions between students and faculty, as measured by at least a 90 percent positive rating on our end-of-semester survey. All student complaints will be investigated by the Dean of Faculty within 14 days.

6. Student learning outcomes

Through maintaining the educational objectives in our curriculum, students are intended to gain competence in the following learning outcomes:

a) Explain the revelation of the Bible in its historical and cultural setting as it relates to God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, and its application for faithful living today.

b) Reason from a sound theological basis as new covenant Christians centered in Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

c) Model the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in congregations.

d) Conduct the work of pastoral ministry in witness to and representation of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

e) Integrate biblical exegesis with sound theological exposition that informs personal spiritual growth and that directs effective ministry in Jesus Christ.
7. Doctrinal foundation

The *Statement of Beliefs* of Grace Communion International provides the doctrinal foundation for GCS.¹

**We believe:**

- There is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God the Father made all things through the Son, sent the Son for our salvation, and gives us the Holy Spirit.
- The Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully human, and is the perfect revelation of the Father and the perfect representative of humanity. He suffered and died on the cross for all human sin, was raised bodily on the third day, and ascended to heaven. Standing in for all humanity before the Father, Jesus Christ provides the perfect human response to God. Since he died for all, all died in him, and all will be made alive in him.
- The Holy Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith, assures believers of their forgiveness and acceptance as God’s dearly loved children, and works in them to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ.
- The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God that testifies to Jesus Christ. The Bible is fully authoritative for all matters of faith and salvation.
- Salvation comes only by God’s grace and not by works, and it is experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians respond to the joy of salvation when they gather in regular fellowship and live godly lives in Jesus Christ.
- We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

¹ For the full *Statement of Beliefs*, go to www.gci.org/aboutus/beliefs.
Basic tenets of Incarnational Trinitarian theology:

We believe that theology should be rooted in the Bible, especially the New Testament. We see a reliable theology articulated by Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzus, and more recently, Karl Barth, Thomas F. Torrance, and many others. Our teachings include:

- The Triune God created all people through the Son of God, who also is known as the Word of God.
- We were created so that we could participate in the love relationship enjoyed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- We are enabled and qualified to participate in this relationship of love through Jesus Christ.
- The Son became human, the man Jesus Christ, taking on our human nature.
- He did this to reconcile all humanity to God through his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.
- The crucified, resurrected and glorified Jesus is the representative and the substitute for all humanity.
- As Savior and Lord of all humanity, Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, and he draws all people to himself by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- In Christ, humanity is loved and accepted by the Father.
- Jesus Christ paid for all our sins—past, present and future—and there is no longer any debt to pay.
- The Father has in Christ forgiven all our sins, and he eagerly desires that we receive his forgiveness.
- We can enjoy his love only as we believe/trust that he loves us. We can enjoy his forgiveness only when we believe/trust he has forgiven us.
- When we respond to the Spirit by turning to God, believing the good news and picking up our cross and following Jesus, the Spirit leads us into the transformed life of the kingdom of God.
C. Institutional Authorization

1. Legal authority

Grace Communion Seminary is an educational institution affiliated with Grace Communion International (GCI), a member of the National Association of Evangelicals. We are committed to the development of the whole person to serve in the ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Grace Communion Seminary is a business name of Ambassador College, a California non-profit religious corporation with federal 501(c)(3) status, which commenced operations in 1947 in Pasadena, California, as a church-related liberal-arts college.

As a non-profit religious organization teaching our own doctrines, and not offering any other degrees, GCS is authorized by the state of California to function as an educational institution exempt from California Education Code, Title 3, Division 10, Part 59, Chapter 8, which regulates private postsecondary institutions.

2. History

Over the years, Ambassador College operated campuses in California, Texas, and England. All of those campuses are closed and our work is now done entirely online. This enables us to serve students without removing them from their current areas of ministry.

In 2003 Ambassador College began offering courses online in biblical studies, theology, and Christian ministry, with an undergraduate program and a graduate program. In 2005, the undergraduate and graduate programs were separated.

- The undergraduate program uses the name Ambassador College of Christian Ministry. It is administered by the GCI affiliate in Australia at www.ambascol.org. It is not accredited.
- The graduate program is doing business as Grace Communion
Seminary, administered from Glendora, CA. It is accredited.

- There is no formal connection between ACCM and Grace Communion Seminary; they have different boards and officers. Courses taken through ACCM are not accepted for credit at GCS.

Grace Communion Seminary limits its educational programs to graduate-level distance-education courses in Bible, theology and ministry. All programs are open to academically qualified men and women who want to expand their education and ministry in the evangelical tradition.

3. Accreditation

Grace Communion Seminary is accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC).\(^2\) DEAC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a recognized accrediting agency, and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

As with most institutions of higher learning, the transferability of credits earned at Grace Communion Seminary is at the discretion of the institution to which the student seeks to transfer. If a student wants to transfer credits to another institution, or wants to use a GCS degree to meet admission requirements of another institution, the student is advised to confirm in advance with that other institution that the GCS credits or degree will be acceptable. The acceptance of credits and degrees is entirely the prerogative of the receiving institution and acceptance cannot be guaranteed.

D. Administration

1. Board of Directors

\(^2\) The address of DEAC is 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808, Washington, D.C. 20036. Their telephone number is 202-234-5100. The website: www.deac.org.
a) Dr. Joseph Tkach, Chairman of the Board of GCS and President of Grace Communion International; Doctor of Ministry from Azusa Pacific Seminary

b) Dr. Gary Deddo, President of Grace Communion Seminary; Ph.D. in Theology from University of Aberdeen

c) J. Michael Feazell, Adjunct Professor at GCS and retired Vice-President of Grace Communion International; Doctor of Ministry from Azusa Pacific Seminary

d) Ronald Kelly, Master of Arts in Organizational Management from University of Phoenix; former Dean at Ambassador University

e) Dr. John McKenna, Adjunct Professor at GCS and at Azusa Pacific Seminary; Ph.D. in historical theology from Fuller Theological Seminary

f) Dr. Dan Rogers, Former Director of GCI Church Administration & Development; Adjunct Professor at Grace Communion Seminary; Ph.D. in Theology from Union Institute and University

g) Patricia P. Shaw, retired Budget Analyst in GCI Church Administration & Development; Master of Arts from Azusa Pacific Seminary

**Advisor to the Board**

Mathew H. Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer of Grace Communion International; Master of Business Administration from University of Phoenix.

2. **Administration**

a) Chief Executive Officer: Gary W. Deddo, Ph.D. He can be contacted at [president@gcs.edu](mailto:president@gcs.edu).
b) Liaison Officer: Russell Duke; Ph.D. in Practical Theology from Union Institute and University. Dr. Duke serves as Director of Assessment and teaches classes in theology and Christian ministry.

c) Chief Academic Officer: Michael Morrison, Dean of Faculty; Ph.D. in Theology (New Testament Studies) from Fuller Theological Seminary. He teaches courses in New Testament and Christian ministry. He can be contacted at dean@gcs.edu. Skype name: michael.morrison-gcs

d) Registrar – Susan Williams. She can be contacted at registrar@gcs.edu Skype: gcs.registrar

3. Faculty

**Full-time faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>degrees</th>
<th>area of teaching specialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Morrison</td>
<td>Ph.D. in New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary</td>
<td>New Testament; Dean of Faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part-time faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>degrees</th>
<th>area of teaching specialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randy Bloom</td>
<td>M.Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Deddo</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Systematic Theology, University of Aberdeen</td>
<td>Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Duke</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Practical Theology, Union Institute and University</td>
<td>Theology and Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Earle</td>
<td>M.A. in History, University of Toronto; M.A. in Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Michael Feazell</td>
<td>D.Min., Azusa Pacific Seminary</td>
<td>Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Finlay</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Old Testament, Claremont</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Graduate School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree/Program</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larry Hinkle</td>
<td>D.Min. in Formational Counseling, Ashland Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Johnston</td>
<td>M.A. in Liberal Studies: Psychology, Regis University; M.A. in Christian Studies, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School</td>
<td>Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McKenna</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Historical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Old Testament and Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff McSwain</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Theology, University of St. Andrews</td>
<td>Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Rogers</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Religious Studies, Union Institute and University</td>
<td>Acts and Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Williams</td>
<td>D.Min., Drew University</td>
<td>Christian Ministry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contact Information

**Mailing address:**  
Grace Communion Seminary  
P.O. Box 5005  
Glendora, CA 91740-0730

If you need to send us something by ordinary mail, use the mailing address given above. If you are sending anything by UPS or FedEx, or if you are dropping by to see us, then you need the street address: 2011 E. Financial Way, Glendora, CA 91741.

**Phone numbers:**  
Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-800-851-2611  
Or you can phone 1-626-650-2306  
Fax: 1-626-650-2305  
Computer support: 1-800-851-2611  
Website: www.gcs.edu  
Email: registrar@gcs.edu
F. Calendar

1. Hours of operation and holidays

GCS offices are normally open 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday.

GCS offices are closed during the following holidays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, and from Christmas through New Year’s Day.

2. Availability of administrators and faculty

The Registrar and the Dean of Faculty are generally available each day the office is open.

Since GCS does not provide office space for part-time faculty, electronic messages are the best way to correspond with the instructors. Contact information is given within each course. Since most instructors are part-time, they do not necessarily check their messages every day. If an instructor does not respond to a message within two days, or it is an urgent matter, please email the GCS office at registrar@gcs.edu, or phone us at 1-800-851-2611.

3. Academic calendar

GCS has three 13-week semesters each year. In each semester, there are lectures for ten weeks (posted each Monday), two more weeks for completing final papers and projects, and one week for final papers to be graded and returned. The spring semester begins in mid-January, the summer semester in mid-May, and the fall semester in mid-September.

The dates for the coming year are:
For assignment schedules and faculty hours, see the course syllabi.

4. Course scheduling

GCS has three 13-week semesters each year. In each semester, there are ten weeks of lectures and online discussions, then two more weeks for completing final papers and projects, and one week for final papers to be graded and returned. Short syllabi listing the required textbooks are updated on our website at least four weeks before each course begins. Students can see the assigned readings, order the books, and begin reading ahead of time.\(^3\) International students may need to pay extra so that their books arrive on time.

Lectures are posted each Monday, by 9 a.m. Pacific time, and students may access them any time after they are posted. (If we forget to do this, phone our office.) In some weeks, students are required to participate in online discussions. There is no specific time that all students must be online – students post their comments at any time between Monday and Thursday, for example, and respond to other students between Friday and Sunday. Because these online discussions involve interactions with other students, they must be done on the week assigned; there is usually no way to “make up” the interaction at a later date.

\(^3\) If fewer than five students sign up for a course, that course may be cancelled, or it may continue, depending on the discretion of the instructor.
Most classes have something due each week. If students need an extension in order to complete the final projects or papers, in most cases we will be able to arrange this, although there is a fee for an extension, because it involves additional work for the instructor and support personnel.

G. Programs and Degrees

GCS offers two degrees: Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) and Master of Theological Studies (MTS). Either degree requires at least 14 courses, or 42 semester units of credit, with a minimum GPA of 2.7 out of 4. We begin with some options that, while they are not degrees in themselves, involve credits that may be used toward a degree.

1. Master’s Level Continuing Education Courses (MLCE)

All GCS students are initially enrolled in the Master’s Level Continuing Education program. This permits students to take courses according to their own interest and need.

Some students simply want to increase their ministry skills and understanding, and this is a lifelong need of all who serve in the church. GCS wants to help in this by providing guidance, structure, training, and verification of these educational achievements. If you begin your studies with a specific interest, such as youth ministry or one section of the Bible, you are welcome to take whatever course interests you most.

If you do not have a specific topic in mind, we suggest that you begin with an introductory course in theology, biblical studies, or Christian ministry. Then take another introductory course – one of these introductory courses is taught every semester. For example:

- **TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ** provides an introduction

In August 2015, we changed our course numbering system by adding 500 to every course, in order to conform to the common practice of using 500-numbers to designate masters-level courses. You may occasionally see some courses without 5 in the number (e.g., TH01).
to the doctrines of the Christian church.

- **BI501 Hermeneutics** examines principles used in understanding the message of the Bible.

- **CM501 Ministerial Leadership** develops concepts of knowing oneself and developing plans for growth in relational skills for service in ministry.

*Program Goal: In Master’s Level Continuing Education, we provide graduate-level courses in biblical, theological, and ministry studies according to the students’ interests and needs, as students wish to improve their pastoral skills or fulfill personal interests.*

*Program Objectives: In the MLCE:*

1. Students will be able to choose topics that have historically been foundational to pastoral and theological education, and in each course, will receive lectures from a qualified instructor, relevant readings in published textbooks, and discussions that help the student articulate ideas and learn from other students. The specific competencies attained will vary depending on the course. Student learning outcomes are described in each course syllabus.

2. Students will receive courses that are academically sound, comparable to courses taken at other graduate theological schools, and useful for pastors and interested lay persons.

3. Students may go at their own pace, as quickly as they wish, up to three classes per semester, or a more moderate pace based upon their ministry responsibilities.

4. Students will receive graduate credit that may be applied toward a master’s degree program, if the student wishes to eventually matriculate into a degree program. The courses are academically identical regardless of the whether the student intends to eventually get a degree.
2. Certificate of Theological Studies (CTS)

After a student has taken TH501,\(^4\) BI501, and two additional courses from any discipline, and maintained a grade point average of at least 2.5, we then mail the student a Certificate of Theological Studies. This is not a degree, but an acknowledgement that a student has achieved their first milestone in our educational programs.

The courses taken will automatically transfer into the next program. There is no formal enrollment for this program; students are considered candidates for the CTS when they register for the course that would enable them to complete the CTS requirements.

Program Goal: In the Certificate of Theological Studies, we seek to prepare graduate students to be conversant in the fundamentals of Trinitarian theology and foundational knowledge of the Bible.

Program Objectives:

1. Students who complete the CTS requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide. This objective is verified by the students’ ability to write papers in a biblical studies course.

2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God. This objective is verified through student papers in a theology course.

3. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons building strong relationships within the love of God

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\(^{4}\) TH505 Doctrine of the Trinity may be substituted for TH501, but it is not recommended for students who are new to theological studies. Transfer credits and experiential learning do not count toward the CTS.
the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

3. Advanced Diploma of Christian Ministry (ADCM)

The ADCM program consists of three courses in addition to the courses needed for the Certificate, for a total of seven courses. Four specific courses are required:

- Either TH501 or TH505
- Either CH501 or CH502
- BI501 Hermeneutics
- CM501 Ministerial Leadership

There must be one additional course in Christian ministry, and two more courses from anywhere in our curriculum. The Advanced Diploma is not a degree, but a recognition that the student has achieved another noteworthy milestone in ministry training.

There must be at least 21 units, with a GPA of at least 2.5. Six units may come from credit transferred in from another accredited institution, or through documented experiential learning. There is no formal enrollment for this program; students are considered candidates for the diploma when they register for the course that would enable them to complete the ADCM requirements. When that course is completed, the diploma will be mailed to the student.

Program goal: In the Advanced Diploma of Christian Ministry, we seek to prepare graduate students for service and leadership in various areas of knowledge and skills to assist with ministry responsibilities.

Program Objectives:

1. Students who complete the ADCM requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide. This objective is verified by the students’ ability to write papers in a biblical studies course.
2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God. This objective is verified through student papers in a theology course.

3. Students will gain a broad perspective on acts of the Holy Spirit in the developing church since the first century. This objective is attained by a church history course and verified with papers and a proctored exam.

4. Students will grow in spiritual maturity and in leadership skills. This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.

5. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons building strong relationships within the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

4. Masters Degrees

After students have completed seven courses, they have the option of enrolling in one of our master’s degree programs. This may be done if the following conditions are met:

a) Must have completed seven GCS courses with a GPA of 2.7 or better.

b) Must have completed at least two courses in Christian ministry (for enrolling in the MPS) or two courses in theology (for enrolling in the MTS).

c) Students must commit to taking courses at a rate that would allow them to complete the program within eight years of when they first began taking GCS courses.5

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5 For example, if a student took the first GCS course in fall 2010 and completed the seventh course in spring 2015, five of those eight years have already elapsed, and the remaining
If students meet these requirements and wish to be classified as a master’s degree student, they will be matriculated (accepted) as a candidate for a master’s degree.

A master’s degree requires a total of 14 courses (42 units). GCS courses completed in previous programs (continuing education, certificate or diploma) will be automatically counted toward the Master’s degree as long as they were taken eight or fewer years before graduation. Up to eight units may come from transfer credit, and an additional nine units may come from documented experiential learning.\(^6\)

If a student wants to receive both master’s degrees, a total of 78 units must be completed, including the specific courses required for each degree; all courses must be completed within ten years.

a. **Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS)**

See above for how to enter the MPS program. The requirements for the degree are:

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seven courses must be taken in the next three years. The student would therefore have to increase the number of courses taken per year. In calculating the rate required for completion, the student should take into consideration that the final course, TM501, often takes more than one semester.

All GCS coursework must be completed within eight years. If the student takes longer than that, the student cannot graduate without re-taking any courses that are older than eight years. An academic leave of absence may extend this limitation (see below).

If a student cannot commit to completion within the eight-year framework, the student is welcome to take courses at whatever pace is desired, by remaining in Master’s Level Continuing Education. If the student’s circumstances change and permit a quicker pace, the student may apply for a master’s degree program any time after the seventh course.

An extension of up to two years will be considered due to any official, documented academic leave of absence granted by GCS in its sole discretion. The submission of a formal petition for leave of absence is the responsibility of the student.

\(^6\) Credit must come from courses relevant to the GCS curriculum, from accredited institutions, and must not be older than eight years prior to enrollment at GCS. See below for details on transfer credits and credit for previous learning based on experience.
1) TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ, or TH505 Doctrine of the Trinity
2) Two additional theology courses
3) BI501 Hermeneutics
4) Two additional courses in Old Testament or New Testament
5) One church history course
6) CM501 Ministerial Leadership
7) CM502 Pastoral Leadership
8) Two additional courses in Christian ministry
9) Two additional courses in any subject area
10) TM501 Theology of Ministry, which requires a summative exam as a prerequisite and requires a capstone project.
11) Grade point average of 2.7 or higher.

Program Goal: In the Master of Pastoral Studies degree, we seek to prepare the student for the spiritual responsibilities of the clergy.

Program Objectives:

1. Students who complete the MPS requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide. This objective is verified by the students’ ability to write papers in a biblical studies course.

2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God. This objective is verified through student papers in a theology course.

3. Students will gain a broad perspective on acts of the Holy Spirit in the developing church since the first century. This objective is attained by a church history course and verified with papers and a proctored exam.
4. Students will grow in spiritual maturity and in leadership skills. This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.

5. Students will develop pastoral skills such as preaching, counseling, teaching, training, mentoring, and leading in service. This objective is attained by Christian ministry courses; the specific skills learned will depend in part on which courses the students elect to take.

6. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons building strong relationships within the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. This objective is verified in ministry course, and especially in the capstone course.

b. Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

See I.H.4 above for how to enter the MTS program. Here are the requirements for completing the degree:

1) TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ
2) TH502 Nature of Humanity and Salvation
3) TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology
4) Two additional theology courses
5) BI501 Hermeneutics
6) Two additional courses in biblical studies
7) Two church history courses
8) CM501 Ministerial Leadership
9) Two additional courses in any subject area
10) TH519 Theological Thesis, which requires a summative exam as a prerequisite and requires a

7 We currently offer only two courses in church history. However, we do not specify that these two particular courses are requirements for the MTS degree. If the student has transfer credit for another church history course, or if GCS adds an additional course in church history, those courses may also be used to meet the church history requirements of the MTS degree.
capstone project.
11) Grade point average of 2.7 or higher.

Program Goal: In the Master of Theological Studies degree, we seek to help students attain a solid theological foundation for personal reflection, to clarify the underpinnings of work within the church, or to be an entry point for further work in the academy.

Program Objectives:

1. Students who complete the MTS requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide. This objective is verified by the students’ ability to write papers in the introductory hermeneutics course, and will be further developed and verified in additional biblical courses.

2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God. This objective is verified through student papers in three required theology courses and additional electives.

3. Students will gain a broad perspective on acts of the Holy Spirit in the developing church since the first century to the modern era. This objective is attained by two church history courses and verified with papers and exams.

4. Students will be able to conduct theological research and develop an argument in favor of a theological position, using generally accepted academic conventions.
II. Admissions Policies

A. State residency

Some U.S. states have regulations that make it financially prohibitive for us to do business with residents of those states. For this reason, we are not currently accepting students from Alabama, Iowa, Maryland, or Oregon. If you are from one of those states, please let us know of your interest and we will see what we can do.

B. Technological requirements

You must have access to a computer connected to the internet. If you are reading this Catalog, you probably already meet the requirements. Dial-up connections will be sufficient for most classes, but a few classes have video materials, which will display better if you have a DSL or cable connection.

You may use any of the common browsers: Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome.

Most of our course lectures are in PDF format. There is a link to three free PDF readers on our public information page. The PDF pages are designed for full-size computers; tablet computers may provide an adequate display, but the materials may be difficult to read on smaller devices.

We require that you have a word-processing program, such as Microsoft Word. Free word-processing programs are also suitable, such as Google Docs, LibreOffice, and Kingsoft Writer.

We highly recommend that you also have a webcam with a microphone, for taking proctored exams. The oral defense of the master’s thesis must be done either by webcam or in person. Your internet connection must be able to transmit video.

For an orientation of how to navigate the website, see below.
C. Academic requirements

Pastoral and theological education involves a significant amount of reading and writing, and our program requires extensive use of computers connected to the internet. If any prospective student has difficulty with any of these tasks, the student should contact us regarding the details and concerns they may have.

Applicants must be at least 21 years old.

GCS offers graduate-level courses that may be used for a master’s degree. A bachelor’s degree is required for entry into the master’s degree programs; see exception below. Proof of degree in an official transcript is required. Transcripts from institutions outside of the U.S. and Canada may need to be evaluated by World Educational Services and (if necessary) translated into English. Students must pay the WES fee. Contact us to see if this will be needed for your transcripts.

Applicants must have attained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4 point scale), in their highest degree earned. Those with a GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 receive provisional acceptance; they must attain a grade of B or better in each of their first four GCS courses for the student to be granted full acceptance status at GCS. Those with a GPA less than 2.5 might be considered, but are not automatically accepted, even for provisional status. Provisional students may take only one course in their first semester, only one in the second semester, and if

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8 The degree must come from an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education, or a foreign equivalent listed in the International Handbook of Universities.

9 If the student submits an application and there is not enough time for official transcripts to arrive, in some circumstances the student may be admitted on a provisional basis and may register and pay the tuition. No credit will be given if an acceptable transcript is not received before the end of that semester; no refunds will be given.

10 In October 2015, the WES Course-by-course fee was $165.
their GPA is then above 3.0, they may take more than one in subsequent semesters.

If English is not the student’s native language, and if the student has not earned a bachelor’s or higher degree at an accredited institution where English is the language of instruction, then students must have a TOEFL score of at least 550 on the paper-based test, or 80 on the internet-based test. The student must have the test results sent to the GCS Registrar.

Individuals with a high school degree, but without a bachelor’s degree, may petition for provisional acceptance into the continuing education program. They must submit an essay or other evidence that they are capable of doing graduate-level work. Students must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 in their first four courses.

Students without a bachelor’s degree may be accepted to the seminary in order to take classes for their own continuing education, but there is no guarantee that they can be accepted into the master’s degree program. No more than 5 percent of the students in the master’s degree program can be admitted without a bachelor’s degree.

D. Notification of acceptance

Students will be notified of acceptance or non-acceptance within one month of application. After we receive the applicant’s transcript(s), letter of recommendation, and all other required documentation, and we accept the student, we send the student an enrollment agreement. The student is to sign this and mail it to the Registrar. The student is not officially enrolled until the signed enrollment agreement is on file in our offices. We will also sign it, and mail it back to the student within one week. If the student is admitted on a provisional basis, that

11 One way to demonstrate graduate-level ability is to document that you have successfully completed training programs comparable to college-level courses, and write an essay about what you have learned through such programs and experiences. A written essay is important, because all GCS courses require a substantial amount of writing.
will be noted on the enrollment agreement. See below for our enrollment agreement.

E. **Credit for previous learning, also called experiential learning**

Candidates for the master’s degree may be given up to nine units of credit for previous learning, including pastoral experience, correspondence courses, pastoral training programs, seminars in a relevant topic, or self-directed study. The application for credit involves documentation of work done, what was learned, and how it is applied in your ministry. Credit is granted based on the extent of learning, not for length of the experiences. For further details and to apply for this credit, see the document on [https://www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23#section-3](https://www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23#section-3).

For the fee, see “Fees” section below. We cannot award credit for previous learning if a person does not have a bachelor’s degree.

F. **Transfer credit**

If another seminary offers a course we do not offer, or offers it at a more convenient time, you may want to take the course there, and transfer the credits to GCS. Please contact us before you do this, because not all credits will transfer. Graduate courses taken from appropriately accredited institutions will be considered for credit toward the ADCM or toward one of the master’s degrees. We reserve the right to refuse transfer credits for any reason. Note the following:

1. Credit can be given only for graduate-level courses in which the student has received B or higher, or a “pass” in pass/fail systems.

2. The courses must come from an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education, or an accepted foreign equivalent listed in the *International Handbook of Universities*. 
3. We will consider courses that were taken in traditional schools, online schools, military schools, etc., as long as they have the appropriate accreditation.

4. Transcripts from institutions outside of the U.S. and Canada may need to be evaluated by World Educational Services and (if necessary) translated into English. Students must pay the WES fee. Contact us to see if this will be needed for your transcripts.

5. A maximum of eight semester units may be transferred into the Master’s degree.¹²

6. The courses must have been taken within eight years before enrollment at GCS.

7. Courses must be relevant to the GCS curriculum. If the course is not directly comparable to a course offered by GCS, the course may in some cases be accepted as counting for an elective in our program. For example, a graduate-level course in public speaking, coupled with experience in giving sermons, may count as an elective in our Christian ministry category.

8. Documentation must include 1) an official sealed transcript sent to us directly from the institution in which the course was completed, and 2) a description of the course from the institution’s catalog or from the course syllabus. The student will generally need to supply this description.

9. Fill out and send the form for transfer credit¹³ to Registrar, Grace Communion Seminary, P.O. Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740.

10. We will inform you by e-mail of whether transfer credit has been granted within 30 days. If credit is denied, we will inform you of

¹² Since our degree programs are built around three-unit courses, transfer students may need to supplement the credits to bring them to a multiple of three. This may be done with an independent study class or with credit for previous learning.

¹³ See the home page of our website, under the heading “Admissions & Records.”
the reasons. If you wish to appeal this decision, you should send a written explanation to the Dean of Faculty, explaining why you disagree with our reasons. The Dean will discuss the matter with the President, and no further appeal is possible.

G. Terms of Admission

To access our course material, you will need access to the Internet, and you will need to be able to read PDF documents. For final exams in some courses, you may need a camera connected to your computer so that your exams can be proctored. For a master’s degree you must satisfactorily complete a thesis.

Our Admission Agreement includes the following:

Student obligation: Students register online for each graduate course and may select any course in keeping with any pre-requisites. To receive a master’s degree (fourteen courses*), you must complete the specific requirements of the program, including the capstone course. To access course material you will need to be able to read PDF documents. All course material is copyrighted by GCS and cannot be distributed without prior written permission. (*Note: Each course = 3 credits.)

Institution’s obligation: GCS will provide the course(s) in which you enroll so that you can complete it within a thirteen-week semester. Courses will be placed online in a timely manner to enable you to schedule your available time over the thirteen weeks of the course. All material will be readily accessed online.

You will be provided the courses on a trimester basis so that the program can be finished by a full-time student in two years. Each course is designed to be completed in thirteen weeks; an extension of three weeks may be granted upon approval by the course professor and payment of the extension fee.
Allowable program completion time: GCS will accept already-earned credits toward our academic programs for eight years. An extension of up to two years, for a total of ten years, will be considered due to any official, documented leave of absence granted by GCS in its sole discretion. The submission of a formal petition for leave of absence is the responsibility of the student.

Cancellation requests must be conveyed in writing to the Registrar and the course professor. This will ensure any refund owed you. Refunds will be given within thirty days of requests. [See below for refund policy.]

Privacy statement: Grace Communion Seminary respects your privacy and the privacy and security of the information you provide. The Seminary does not sell, disseminate or disclose to entities outside the Seminary the information you provide. The Seminary may use some of the information you provide to analyze trends and create summary statistics for the Seminary and the accreditation organization, and/or any government report as may be required by law.

Transfer credits: Acceptance for transfer of GCS academic credits is determined by the receiving institution.

Fees: see page 40.

Refund policy: see page 36.

Complaints/grievances: see page 38.

H. Course enrollment agreement

In the enrollment agreement that students must sign electronically
before they can register for a course, we include the following:  

**COURSE FEE:** $450.\(^{15}\) (Must be paid in full during course registration period.)

**COURSE LOCATION:** Distance Education: www.gcs.edu

**CREDITS/LESSONS:** 3 Semester Credits/ 10 lectures

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** [varies according to course; it is included on the Course Registration Site and displayed at www.gcs.edu/course]

**COURSE REGISTRATION:** Registration begins two weeks prior to each semester start (spring semester, approximately first 10 days of January; summer semester, approximately first 10 days of May; fall semester, approximately first 10 days of September.) See “Academic Calendar” for exact dates on website homepage: www.gcs.edu.

**COURSE LESSONS AND MATERIALS:** Course lectures and other online materials are provided on the GCS website on a weekly basis.

**INSTITUTION’S OBLIGATION:** You will be provided this course on a semester basis. Courses will be placed online in a timely manner to enable you to schedule your available time over the thirteen weeks of each course. All material will be provided so that it can be readily accessed online.

**NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY:** Grace Communion Seminary admits students of any race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-

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\(^{14}\) The course enrollment agreement for TH519 and TM501 is slightly different, since there are no lectures, and the extension fee is different for those capstone courses.

\(^{15}\) This fee, like others, may change in future years.
administered programs.

STUDENT’S OBLIGATIONS: Acquiring required textbooks before the start of the course is the responsibility of the student. No textbooks are sold by GCS; a list of textbooks for each course is found on the GCS website. (On the homepage, left side, click on Course Descriptions. Then click on “short syllabus” for desired course.)

Students are required to meet the posted dates for completion of assignments; when hardships are encountered that may cause delay in completing assignments, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the professor for consideration of an extension. If a course extension is needed, the student must follow the process stated under COURSE EXTENSION.

TERMINATION DATE OF AGREEMENT: The Course Enrollment Agreement ends 20 weeks after the course start date. Students must request a Course Extension if they wish to extend completion of assignments beyond the 13th week of the course. (Additional fee of $50 must accompany the petition.)

COURSE EXTENSION: The student may request a course extension of three weeks to complete assignments and tests. Contact the Registrar at 800-851-2611 or registrar@gcs.edu. The fee for the extension is $50 per course.

COURSE CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY: Cancellation requests must be in writing, sent to the Registrar. This will be sufficient for ensuring any refund owed you. Refunds will be given within 30 days of requests.16

Refund policy for courses for credit:

16 For example: If you paid $450 tuition and withdrew during the fifth week, the refund would be 50 percent, or $225.
1. Students who cancel before the first class will receive a full refund ($450.00). Class lectures are posted each Monday.
2. For students who cancel during the first week, a refund of tuition shall be $450.00 (100% of the tuition cost).
3. If a student withdraws from a course after the first week, the refund shall be $360.00 (80% of the tuition cost).
4. If a student withdraws from a course after the second week, the refund shall be $315.00 (70% of the tuition cost).
5. If a student withdraws from a course after the third week, the refund will be $270.00 (60% of the tuition cost).
6. If a student withdraws from a course after the fourth week, the refund will be $225.00 (50% of the tuition cost).
7. If a student withdraws from a course after the fifth week, the refund will be $180.00 (40% of the tuition cost.)
8. If a student withdraws from a course after the sixth week, the refund will be $135.00 (30% of the tuition cost.)
9. If a student withdraws from a course after the seventh week, the refund will be $90.00 (20% of the tuition cost.)
10. If a student withdraws from a course after the eighth week, the refund will be $45.00 (10% of the tuition cost.)
11. There will be no refund after the ninth week. A grade will be assigned based upon course requirements.

Courses may be dropped with the posting of a grade of withdrawal (W) at any time through the ninth week of the semester. See the GCS Academic Catalog [i.e., this document] for grading policies regarding course withdrawals. Refunds for audits are at the same weekly percentage as refunds for courses taken for credit.\textsuperscript{17}

TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS: As with all institutions of higher learning, the transferability of credits earned at Grace

\textsuperscript{17} Refunds will be given within 30 days after the student has given notice of withdrawal. If special circumstances exist, such as serious health problems or a death in the family, GCS may deem that a larger refund is appropriate.
Communion Seminary is at the complete discretion of an institution to which the student may seek to transfer. If a student wishes to transfer credits to another institution, or wishes to use a GCS degree to meet admission requirements of another institution, the student is advised to confirm in advance with that other institution that the GCS credits or degree will be acceptable.

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES: If a student has a grievance with a specific instructor, whether about student grades or conduct, course content, or serious deviation from the published syllabus, the student should first attempt to resolve the problem with the instructor.  If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty (dean@gcs.edu) with a full description of the situation. (If the Dean of Faculty is the instructor, then contact the President, president@gcs.edu). The Dean will consult with the instructor and the President, and will notify the student of the decision within 30 days.

If the grievance is about academic disqualification, dismissal, financial matters or GCS policies, the student should first attempt to resolve the problem with the Registrar (registrar@gcs.edu). If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty. The Dean will consult with the Registrar, and will notify the student of the decision within 14 days.

Students may appeal financial and academic matters to the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. See http://www.bppe.ca.gov/forms_pubs/complaint.pdf. Students may also contact our accrediting agency, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808, Washington, D.C. 20036, phone 202-234-5100, email info@deac.org. website:

\[18\] This should be done within two weeks of the alleged problem, or within two weeks after the final grade is posted. The instructor then has two weeks to respond.

\[19\] This should be done within four weeks of the alleged problem, or within two weeks of when the student first brought the problem to the attention of the instructor, whichever is less.
www.deac.org.
III. Fees and Financial Aid

A. Fees

1. Application fee: $50
2. Transcript – A transcript of your previous education is required, but that fee is set by and paid to the sending institution. Transcripts that are not in English must be sent to us by way of World Education Services, and WES requires a fee for the evaluation of an international transcript. If you want GCS to send a transcript to another institution, the fee is $10 for normal service, $25 for expedited service within the U.S.A.
3. Cost per course taken for credit: Tuition, $150 per credit hour, $450 per course – must be paid by credit or debit card at the time of registration for the course.
4. Cost of books
   a. Cost of assigned textbooks ranges from $20 to $100 per course.
   b. The “average” course requires textbooks costing $50.
   c. Students in some nations may need to pay for expedited shipping in order to get textbooks on time.
5. Course extension fee, for three weeks: $50.
6. Audit cost per course: $300.
7. Assessment fee for previous learning: $50 for each unit requested. This fee is not refundable.
8. Capstone continuation fee: $150 (if more than two semesters are needed for the capstone project).
8. Graduation fee – $100.
9. Incidental costs that vary from one student to another:
   a. Costs to remain connected to the internet
   b. Costs involved in taking proctored exams – either a webcam or paying third-party proctoring fees
   c. Costs involved in using a library – either interlibrary loan

20 We do not plan to raise fees in 2015 and 2016. Costs may change in the future.
fees, or postage to return books to the GCS library

10. Total costs for the Master’s Degree: At our current tuition charges, the cost of the program would total to about $6350, plus $500 to $700 for books. The cost may be less if the student is able to document previous experiential learning; the total will increase if our tuition increases before the student has completed the program.

For cancellation and refund policies, see page 38 above.

B. Financial aid

Scholarships are available to GCI senior pastors and to those who are part of the official GCI internship program. For details, ask the Registrar. The most likely source of additional financial assistance is the congregation in which the student is currently ministering. GCS does not participate in federal Title IV programs.
IV. Academic Policies

A. Dual registration

A student who wishes to register at another college while in attendance at this institution may do so without formal approval.

B. Time limits

All courses at GCS must be completed within eight years. An extension will be considered upon petition. Requirements for the master’s degree are based on GCS policies on the date that the student first enrolled, or the current catalog, whichever the student chooses. Electronic copies of our older catalogs are kept on file in the Registrar’s office, but we also advise students to download a copy for themselves when they first enroll.

C. Length of program

Since most of our students are part-time students, it usually takes them three years to take the first seven courses, when they can matriculate into a master’s degree program. After that, it is usually necessary to take another three years to complete the degree. Fulltime students can complete the degree in less time. The maximum length of time is eight years, or ten if a formal leave of absence was obtained. We recommend that new students take only one course in their first semester. A student must get advance approval to take more than three courses per semester. Students also need advance approval to register for another course if they have not yet completed a course from the previous semester.

D. Registration deadlines

Students must register before the first week of the course and pay for the tuition and fees with credit or debit card at the time of registration. Students should consult the short syllabus online to order textbooks in
advance of the start of the course. GCS does not sell textbooks; they must be obtained from online booksellers or local bookstores.

E. Auditing courses

Students auditing a course receive no grades or course credit for the class toward completion of the degree and therefore need not fulfill assignments, papers or tests. Students who are enrolled in a course and wish to change their status to an audit can do so at any time before the final assignment is due. Some tuition may be refunded if this change is made in the first two weeks; see “Tuition and Fees.” Access to lectures will be granted throughout the semester.

F. Students with disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, we will provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis. If special services are needed, please contact the Dean of Faculty, dean@gcs.edu.

G. Grading policies

Grades are the means by which instructors tell students whether they are meeting the goals of the course. If you are not learning what you should, then we do you a disservice if we cause you to think you have mastered the material.

21 If auditing students submit assignments, the instructor is not obligated to grade them.

22 If you are unable to do a particular task of ministry well, and yet we make you think that you are fully capable of the task, and we thereby encourage you to accept ministry responsibilities that exceed your capabilities, then we have done a disservice to you and to all those affected by that ministry. If you attempt further academic work at another institution because we have overrated your academic abilities, then we have done a disservice to you and the other academic institution, and have given people reason to doubt the integrity of GCS as an educational institution.
We want GCS classes to be helpful in your ministry, but the classes are not a measure of your value in ministry. Grades are merely an academic measurement to give you feedback – they are not a measure of intelligence or spirituality. If you did the best you could in the time that you had available, and got a B, then that is an honorable grade. Just as no believer has every spiritual gift, so also no student is good at every subject. People who are good pastors may not be particularly gifted at academic work (and vice versa!).

A indicates outstanding work, with evidence of remarkable skill, creativity or energy. We are pleased with the quality of work that GCS students submit, but if we judge everyone as “remarkable” and “outstanding,” our expectations are too low.

B is an honorable grade, showing work and comprehension beyond the minimum, with some evidence of extra effort, achievement or improvement.

C is for students who fulfilled the assignments, but did not do very well in them. C- = Below expectations, either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because the number of errors interferes with clear communication. A grade of C- may also indicate failure to follow directions, or failure to demonstrate effort and improvement.

D is given for unsatisfactory work, with no credit given.

F is given when the student did not complete the assignments as directed, or because the level of performance is well below an acceptable level for graduate level work.

In general, GCS students are capable of doing good academic work, and they rarely get a C if they devote at least 135 hours for the course. If they receive a C, it is usually because (sometimes through no fault of their own) they did not give the course the time that it needed. However, simply putting in the time is no guarantee that you will receive a B or higher – grades are given based on the quality of the work that we receive.
If you have a complaint about a grade, you should first attempt to resolve the problem with the instructor. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty (if the Dean is the instructor, then contact the President) with a full description of the situation. The Dean will consult with the instructor and the President, and will notify the student of the decision.

H. Computing grade point averages

Grade point averages are used as criteria for continued enrollment at the Seminary and for graduation. The grade point average for a particular period is determined by dividing the total number of semester hours of all courses for which the student received a grade into the total number of grade points. If a student has taken a course more than once, only the second grade is included in the calculation. The following table shows the grade points allocated, for each semester unit, to each letter grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Computer support and complaint procedures

If a student has a complaint about technical issues on our website, the student should first seek help from computer support services, at support@gcs.edu, or by phoning 1-800-851-2611. If the support personnel are unable to help, please contact the Dean of Faculty (dean@gcs.edu) with a description of the situation.

If a student has a complaint about academic matters or administrative issues, see section II.H.
J. **Student records**

Students may change their own email address on the GCS website, but such changes should also be sent to the Registrar. Students should also notify the Registrar if there is a change in phone number or physical mailing address.

GCS does not issue student ID cards. We can provide a gcs.edu email address if the student needs one.

K. **Academic freedom**

GCS offers education from a specific theological perspective. Our courses are biblically based, and representative of the tenets of our sponsoring denomination, Grace Communion International. For the *Statement of Beliefs*, go to http://www.gci.org/aboutus/beliefs.

In areas of course content where GCI does not have a denominational position, we endeavor to present a balanced evangelical, orthodox view. Instructors may present their own position on areas that are speculative, on which GCI has not taken a position.

Students may exercise academic freedom in critical thinking. Therefore, in research papers, discussion forums, etc., students are permitted to argue in favor of a position different than that promoted by the course. When GCS instructors grade such submissions, they should grade on the quality of the research and analysis, not solely on the specific conclusions that have been reached.

When papers are evaluated by academic criteria, the acceptance of a paper as sufficient for the program does not necessarily imply that the conclusion has been accepted by the instructor, the seminary, or the sponsoring denomination.

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23 After logging in to the website, click on your name in the extreme upper right corner; then in the lower-left corner, click on “edit profile.”
If a student believes that the instructor is teaching something false, the student should first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student and instructor cannot agree, the student may appeal to the Dean of Faculty. The Dean will discuss the matter with the instructor, and respond to the student within 14 days. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, either the Dean or the student may request that the matter be discussed by the Curriculum Committee, which will then make a recommendation to the President. Depending on the meeting schedule of the Curriculum Committee, this may take several months. In any case, the student should realize that we do not have time to write detailed responses to all the theological controversies that exist within Christianity, and even the most detailed of responses would not convince everyone. No further appeal is possible.

L. Privacy policy

U.S. federal law mandates that:

1. Students have a right to see what is in their educational files.

2. Students have the right to challenge information in the file, or to insert a statement into the file if the student believes that the records are inaccurate, misleading or a violation of privacy.

3. Students can, but are not required to, waive the right to see certain items in their educational files, such as letters of recommendation. The person giving the recommendation should know whether or not the student has signed a waiver.

4. Grades are confidential. If faculty use student assignments as samples for future classes, all identifying details must be removed from the document. Grade information may be shared with other GCS faculty and staff for academic purposes.

5. GCS has the right to release basic facts about the student to anyone who asks:
   - student’s name and years in which the student took classes at GCS.
• whether the student is currently enrolled in a class.
• whether the student has earned a degree.

6. Additionally, we may release more information about our students to an accreditation agency or government agency so they can contact those students to verify what we are doing. This includes names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and previous educational qualifications. We will not release this information for other purposes.

7. Other than the above-listed information, GCS will not release additional information about the student without signed consent. Transcripts, grades and other personal information will not be released without written permission.

8. If students believe that GCS is not complying with the requirements of FERPA, they may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

M. Transcript requests

Student records are confidential, so we cannot process a transcript request unless we receive a signed request and the appropriate payment. We cannot send a transcript if you have any outstanding obligations to the Seminary, such as library fines. Send all requests to the Registrar and include instructions on where the transcript should be mailed. We will retain your academic records permanently. You are allowed one free transcript for your own records.
V. Academic Progress

GCS offers several programs. Students may proceed step-by-step from one program to another, toward one of the degrees:

1. Master’s Level Continuing Education – take courses as desired
2. Certificate of Theological Studies – four courses
3. Advanced Diploma of Christian Ministry – seven courses
4. Master of Pastoral Studies – 14 courses
5. Master of Theological Studies – 14 courses

A. Maintaining satisfactory progress

Since all coursework for a master’s degree must be completed within eight years, and 14 courses are required, students who want to obtain a degree should take at least two courses per year.24 We advise that you begin by taking program requirements rather than electives. Since a GPA of 2.7 is required for graduation, you should aim for a grade of B- or better in all of your classes.

Most courses require you to log in to the website at least once or twice a week, either to participate in a forum or to submit a written assignment. Failure to do so may hurt your grade; see the respective courses for their policies on forum participation.

B. Suggested sequence

Most courses do not have formal prerequisites. However, your educational experience may be more enjoyable if you follow the steps given below:

1. Begin with the foundational courses (they are required, if you are seeking a master’s degree):

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24 This can be reduced if the student has transfer credit or credit for previous learning.
2. Take courses depending on your interests and our schedule of courses. Aim to fulfill the requirements of the Certificate of Theological Studies first, and then meet the requirements of the Advanced Diploma of Christian Ministry. The ADCM requires a church history course.

3. After you have taken seven courses, decide whether you wish to seek a master’s degree. All courses for the degree must be completed within the eight years previous to your graduation. So calculate how many courses you will need, how much time you will have, and how many courses you will need to take each year. If you can commit to that pace, and have a GPA of 2.7 or higher, then you may apply for one of the master’s degree programs.

4. You may also request transfer credit, if any, and request credit for relevant experiential learning. See our website for further instructions on those.

5. Choose your next courses to ensure that you will meet the requirements of the degree, including the required number of biblical studies courses, theology courses, church history, and ministry.  

6. Before you can register for the capstone course, you must have at least 36 units of credit, and you must pass a summative exam. See the short syllabus of TM501 or TH519 for what that exam will

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25 On online.gci.org, you can see an unofficial transcript of courses you have taken so far. Go to https://online.gci.org/live/ScriptContent/Index.cfm and login. On the left-hand side under HOME, click on Education, then select: GCS Fulfilled Courses. You may also discuss program requirements with our Registrar.
include and how it will be administered.

7. As part of the capstone course, you must write a major paper. You have then completed the master’s degree!

C. Incompletes

A student will be given an Incomplete grade when all the following conditions apply:

1) whenever required course work is missing,
2) when that missing work would result in the student receiving a lower final grade and
3) when the student has formally requested an extension and paid the extension fee.

In all other instances, a regular letter grade is given with the missing work counted as “zero” or “failure.” If the extension is granted, all missing course work must be made up in consultation with the instructor within three weeks after the final paper was due, unless otherwise arranged. In cases of health or other personal difficulties, a grade of W may also be given.

Students cannot register for more courses if they have an incomplete.

D. Withdrawing from courses

Courses may be dropped any time prior to the date of the final examination or paper. These requests should be conveyed in writing to the Registrar and the instructor(s). (See “Course Enrollment Agreement,” above, for our refund policy.)

If a student drops a course before the tenth lecture is scheduled to be posted online, a refund will be made and a grade of W will be assigned whether or not the student is passing.

If the withdrawal is initiated after materials have been posted for the tenth week of the semester, a mark of W for Withdrawal will be
assigned if the instructor informs the Registrar that the student had a passing grade at the date of the official withdrawal. A mark of F will be assigned if 1) the student is failing at the time of withdrawal and 2) the student withdraws after the tenth lecture is posted.

E. **Examination and course re-takes**

In general, we do not allow students take an examination again. We *do* allow students to take a course again (if they pay the tuition again), and only the second grade is then counted in the GPA.

F. **Academic leave of absence**

If health or other unforeseen circumstances make it impossible for you to continue your GCS studies for six months or more, please contact the Registrar for a leave of absence. There is no charge for this, and it will extend the length of time you have to complete your degree.

The granting of a leave of absence indicates a continuing relationship with the Seminary and allows students to resume studies at a specific time without reapplying for admission to the Seminary. A leave of absence generally does not exceed four semesters in length.

G. **Inactive students**

If a student in Master’s Level Continuing Education has not taken a course in the past two years, or a student admitted to a master’s degree program has not taken a course in one year, the student will be considered “inactive.” A student may re-activate their status either by contacting the Registrar or by registering for a course. As mentioned above, GCS courses taken more than eight years previous will not be counted toward degree requirements unless a formal leave of absence was requested.
H. Academic probation

Although a GPA of at least 2.7 is required for the degree, students are not put on academic probation unless their GPA falls below 2.5. Academic probation serves as a warning that a student is in danger of academic disqualification. A student who has not achieved both a term and cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (C) or higher at the close of a semester will be placed on academic probation. The student will be notified of this probationary status.

I. Academic disqualification

A student becomes academically disqualified and may not continue enrollment under any of the following conditions:

1) A student fails in six or more hours of course work in any given year.
2) A student on academic probation fails to achieve both a term and cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) or higher.

The student will be notified within one week of any disqualification. The President and Dean may waive academic disqualification if individual circumstances warrant such action.

J. Appeal of disqualification

A student who becomes disqualified may appeal the disqualification by filing an appeal at the Registrar’s Office within two weeks of the date of notification of disqualification.

After the appeal has been considered by the President and Dean, the Registrar will notify the student of the decision. Once this decision has been made, no further appeal is allowed.

Disqualified students are not eligible for readmission until at least three semesters have elapsed. If readmitted, the student will be on academic probation and will be expected to satisfy the requirements for removal from probation by the end of the term.
K. Student code of conduct

GCS students are expected to:

1) Do their own work. Presenting another person’s work as if it were your own is called plagiarism. Even if it is done accidentally, such as by carelessly failing to acknowledge a source, it is a serious violation of academic integrity. In general, any quote of more than five words in a row should be put within quote marks, and the source noted. The penalty for plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, is a failing grade for the assignment in which it occurs, or on the second offense, failure of the course. If plagiarism occurs a third time, the student will be terminated from the program and not allowed to take any more classes.

For more information about plagiarism, see Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/. For tips on avoiding plagiarism, either by paraphrasing or using quote marks, see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/.

Extensive quoting does not fit the definition of “plagiarism” if the sources are given credit, but it may still be unethical. Quotes should not comprise more than 25 percent of any of your papers. We want to see your thoughts, not how much you can copy. Use quotes when they support your thoughts – do not use them as a substitute for your thinking. Most quotes need some sort of introduction or commentary from you, to indicate why you are including them – as an authoritative definition, for example, or a well-said conclusion to your research, or as a view you are trying to refute.

2) Do honest work. Honesty and integrity are foremost in the responsibility of the servant and minister of Jesus Christ. Inventing sources or quotes is a violation of academic integrity.
Academic dishonesty also includes cheating on an exam. You may be copying your own notes, but if notes are not allowed on the exam, then that is dishonest, and cause for failure of the course. You must assume that you cannot use any materials unless you are specifically authorized to do so by your instructor. For example, some instructors permit the use of plain Bibles, those without study notes or chain references. In general, if external materials are permitted, you will need to be familiar with them already, otherwise you will not have enough time to complete the exam.

Helping other students cheat on exams or papers is also forbidden. It is also a violation of academic integrity to assist another student in plagiarism. For example, if you give your paper to another student knowing that they will probably copy it, you are participating in the dishonesty. If you give another student a copy of the exam questions, both students are engaging in academic dishonesty.

Submitting the same paper, or substantial portions of a paper, for credit in more than one class is not allowed without advance permission.

3) Conduct themselves in a civil manner in online discussions. Students should refrain from name-calling, imputing motives or other ad hominem attacks on instructors or other students. Online discussions should be treated confidentially. The class website, and any email addresses obtained through enrollment in the class, are not to be used for commercial activity, political activities, or for airing grievances. The topics permitted on discussion forums are at the discretion of the instructors.

4) Communicate. If problems arise that make it difficult for the student to participate in the class, it is the student’s responsibility to communicate this to the instructor.

5) Remain connected. GCS classes are conducted online. GCS has the responsibility to keep its website functioning; it is the student’s
responsibility to be able to access our website. If a student’s computer breaks down or if an Internet connection is lost, it is the student’s responsibility to find another way to connect to the class, or to withdraw from the class. Students should check their email on a regular basis and ensure that email from gcs.edu is allowed through any spam filters. Check the spam folder the first week of each class.

6) Respect GCS copyrights and other properties. Students are not to attempt to damage or disrupt any part of the GCS website, nor attempt to enter parts of the website for which they are not authorized. Class materials may not be published in any form, or presented orally, without written permission from the President. Students should not make marks in any book from the GCS library, and should return books on time.

Class lectures, forum discussions, quizzes and exams should not be shared with others. Online discussions are confidential, and what a student writes in a forum should not be publicized in other places, unless permission has been granted in advance by the student. Even so, students should realize that confidences are not always kept, and should not write things that would cause them substantial harm if they were accidentally made more public.

Students should abide by all copyright laws – they are not to post copies of copyrighted materials on our website, for example. Students are allowed by the “fair use” provision of copyright law to make copies for research purposes – not to copy an entire book, but to copy a small percentage of the book.26

7) Repeated violations of these policies may lead to failure of a course

26 One rule of thumb (but not the only consideration) is that copying should not affect the commercial market for the book. It may be acceptable to make copies in lieu of using a library, but not to make a copy instead of purchasing the book. Further details on copyright law can be seen at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/731/1/.
and, if violations recur in another course, dismissal from the seminary.

L. Disciplinary disqualification

If students have repeated failures in academic honesty, repeated violations of student conduct (see above), or repeated failures of a course, GCS will terminate them as a student, and they will not be allowed to register for any more courses.

If students wish to withdraw from the Seminary, they may send that request in writing to the Registrar. They will no longer be counted as a student, and they will not receive any email information about upcoming courses or registration.

M. Holding of records

Student records may be placed on a hold status because of financial or other obligations to the Seminary. While a student’s records are on hold, registration will not be allowed, nor will transcripts of credits be released. Records will be held until the obligation is cleared.

N. Graduation

Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.7 in order to graduate. A student cannot graduate if there are any outstanding obligations to the Seminary, such as library fines. Students are considered graduates when the thesis has been completed, and a diploma will be sent to the student.

Formal GCS graduation ceremonies will be held in conjunction with GCI international conferences, for all students who completed the degree requirements since the previous ceremony. Attendance is not required. For those who want to participate, there is a fee to cover the rental of robes and other graduation regalia. GCS does not give graduation honors or participate in an honor society.
O. **Counseling and Placement Services**

GCS does not offer any career services, job counseling or placement services. We do not guarantee any ordination or pastoral appointment. Our program is designed to assist personal and professional development in the roles in which our students are already serving, or those who simply want to learn more about the Bible, theology, and ministry.
VI. Study suggestions

A. Course study materials

In each course, the materials you need are listed in the course syllabus. The short syllabus tells you the textbooks you will need, whether there is an exam or research paper, and what the schedule for the course will probably be. Most courses give you reading suggestions for each week. If your course does not, create your own schedule, reading perhaps 80-100 pages each week, to ensure that you are keeping pace with the work needed.

A few courses have additional study guides to guide you in studying for the final exam. Some level of anxiety is normal for students taking exams, but please be assured that the exam is designed to document what you know, not to point out your failures.

Most courses require certain textbooks, some online discussions, perhaps a written book review or reaction paper, sometimes a research paper or project. Most classes have either a final exam or a research paper. The specific requirements for each course are listed in the course syllabi – all short syllabi can be accessed from “course descriptions,” at www.gcs.edu/course. Different students learn in different ways, but we offer here a few suggestions on how to study for your courses.

B. Make a study schedule

All our courses, in order to offer three semester units of credit, must involve at least 135 hours of student work, so that means 12 or so hours of reading, research, writing, or website work each week. You will have to be disciplined in your use of time – make yourself a schedule and stick to it. Since there is no specific class time, some students who are new to online work find it tempting to put things off – “I can do it later.” If you do this, it does not take long for a large backlog of work to accumulate, and that is discouraging.

It is important to keep on schedule – and even to work ahead, to make allowance for other unforeseen needs. Most of our students are involved in
some sort of pastoral work, and emergencies are common in this line of work. If anyone in the congregation has a crisis, that crisis is shared with the pastor. Pastors thereby have more crises than anyone else, and part of good planning is to make allowance for such possibilities.

For many pastors, Monday is a day to relax after the weekend’s work. We encourage you to relax by reading – go to the website, download and print the lecture posted that week, review the assignments for the upcoming week or two, and get started! Establish a habit of reading at least 10 or so pages each day. You will understand the material better if you spread it out, rather than if you try to read 70 pages in one day.

C. Take notes

In most of our courses, the lectures are the most important part of the course. So read the lectures carefully, when you are most alert. Highlight or underline important points. Circle unfamiliar words, and look up the meanings. If the lectures refer to scriptures, look them up. Write comments in the margins. At the end of each section of the lecture, write a paragraph to summarize what it taught you. That will help you review the material in the future. (The last course in the master’s program, TM501, requires a summative exam, so you may want to review the course a few years after you have taken it.)

In your textbooks, underline important information. Put question marks, exclamation marks, or comments in the margin. Those can also help you review – and to find material when you write forum comments or research papers. Have you ever thought, “Where did I read that?” If you have marked your books, you’ll be able to find it much easier.

27 Some classes offer audio lectures. Listening while driving is not an adequate study method. Rather, listen when you can take notes. Later, you can listen while driving as a review.

28 In some cases, e-books are available for textbooks. Studies have shown that students interact with material, and retain it better, from printed books. You may use e-books if you wish, but be sure to study what you read. E-book readers offer convenience, but also many distractions.
D. **How to format a paper**

GCS classes are offered at the graduate level. We expect that our students submit papers according to the generally accepted customs of American academic work. However, some of our students have not been in college for decades, so may need a few reminders. To help you in that, see “How to Format a GCS Paper,” posted on the “Public Information” section of our site: www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23. For additional details, see Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/02. For specifics on citation style, see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/.

E. **How to write a book review**

Several of our courses require you to write a book review. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold: 1) to assure us that you actually read the book, which means that you have probably learned some of its contents, and 2) to get you to interact with the book, which increases the amount you learn and remember.

In general, we do not want a repetition of information about the author and the table of contents of the book. Rather, we want you to show that you have *thought* about the book – to describe some of its helpful points, and to observe any weaknesses. Find some areas in which it offered information that helped you in your ministry, and explain how it is helpful. Find other areas of the book with which you disagree, or perhaps are not convinced.


F. **How to write a reaction paper**

Some courses assign reaction papers, or response papers. These are similar
to book reviews, but they focus more on your personal reaction or response to what you have read. If your instructor specifies what is desired, then follow those instructions. Otherwise, you might find some helpful guidance at http://uwp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/response%20paper.pdf.

G. How to contribute to a discussion forum

Most GCS classes require participation in an online discussion. This is one of the learning opportunities in any classroom. In a traditional classroom, students ask questions, get responses, talk about how the topic applies to their situations, etc. This interaction with the material helps students learn more than they would from simply reading a textbook, and students learn from what other students are saying.

Online classes, unlike correspondence courses, can give students a similar experience – but it has to be structured a little differently, since our students are not logged in at the same time. We do not have the advantage of a spontaneous discussion, but we have the advantage that our discussions can be a little better researched, better thought-out, and graded more objectively. We’ll discuss the computer details later. Here we’ll comment on how to write a good comment.

A good contribution to an online discussion…
1. is on time – generally by the end of Thursday.
2. is relevant to the topic.
3. shows not just opinions, not just facts, but opinions or conclusions based on facts. It shows good logic.
4. shows some connection of the discussion with the world outside of the forum – lectures, textbooks, or life experience.
5. shows good grammar, and readers can clearly understand what you are saying.
6. stimulates further discussion, either through questions or with ideas that provoke other students to make comments.

A discussion, by definition, requires that students respond to what other students have posted. A good response…
1. is on time – by the end of Sunday
2. is in the right place (that is, it is posted as a “reply” instead of
being posted as a new topic).
3. adds something to the conversation, building on the initial ideas, showing thought, not just a quick reaction.
4. shows connection with the world outside the forum – in lectures, textbooks, experience, other GCS classes, etc.

Comments should not be long. Two medium-length comments are better than one long one. Think of a classroom: students generally do not want to listen to some other student go on and on for five or ten minutes. Research in online classes at other schools shows that long submissions are less likely to be read, and less likely to be commented on. One paragraph of about ten lines is sometimes enough, but topics in some of our courses require lengthier comments.

H. GCS library

Some of our courses require research outside of the assigned textbooks. These may be commentaries, articles in professional journals, or encyclopedias devoted to theology, ministry, or biblical studies. Students have several options to conduct this research. One option is our library.

1. A catalog of our books is posted at the public information section of our website, [http://gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23](http://gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23).
2. To request a book, send an email to registrar@gcs.edu.
3. For students in the U.S.A., books will be sent via U.S. Postal Service media mail (book rate). Most books take one week to ten days to arrive.
4. The loan period is four weeks, which includes the initial shipping time. The return postmark should be within four weeks after the initial postmark. If no other student is requesting the book, a book may be renewed for an additional four weeks. Send any request for renewal to registrar@gcs.edu.
5. Return postage is at the student’s expense. U.S. Postal Service media mail is usually the most economical. Send the book to Grace Communion Seminary, PO Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740-0730.
6. International shipping and U.S. priority mail can be arranged at the
7. Books returned late will be assessed at 25 cents per day.

8. Books that are lost in the mail, either on the initial shipment or on the return, will have to be replaced. Students will be charged for the cost of purchasing a replacement book, plus a $10 replacement fee. Library fees and fines must be paid before a student can be issued a transcript or diploma. If the book is worth more than $50, we recommend that it be insured.

1. Additional research options

In the information age, we have a multitude of sources. What we want is usually “out there” somewhere, but we don’t know where.

If you live near a theological library, see if they allow visitors to use their library. They may not let you check out any books, but you will probably be allowed to use the library, make photocopies, etc. Browse around the library to see what they have—it might be a good resource for you to use in GCS classes or in your ministry.

But what can you do if you don’t have time to drive to a theological library? What you need may be on the internet. There is an ever-expanding wealth of scholarly materials available on the internet, as well as a lot of rubbish. The Internet rarely has the level of research you would need for a doctorate, but it is often sufficient for most master’s level classes.

We have some instructions that can help you. Go to the public information page on our website: http://www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23. That page contains several student resources, one of which is “Research Resources Available Off Campus.” Click on that, and you’ll see a PDF document explaining some of your options. You can print that out if you want, or you can save it to your computer for later reference.

Let’s suppose you want to do some internet research on Mark 8. You could do a Google search for “Mark 8:31” and get millions of possibly relevant pages. You can’t read millions of pages—you probably don’t even want to read 10 pages of search results to see if they have what you are looking for. Some of these are probably good, but others are unsubstantiated opinion, and
some are irrelevant.

How can you estimate the quality of these resources? You want authors who have credentials in the field, showing that at least somebody else thinks they know something about the topic. Chances are, you don’t want to investigate the qualifications of the authors of 30 pages. Generally you can’t find anything because most authors on the internet don’t have any credentials; they have no verifiable expertise in the subject.

What you want are resources written by people who know something about the topic—resources that are so useful that people are willing to pay for them, that companies are willing to invest some money in making sure that the product is reliable. What you need are books. Some of those million pages on the internet are high-quality resources written by experts. But it is difficult to find the golden needles hidden in the pile of rubbish. The faster way to search for high-quality resources is to narrow your internet search to books.

You can do some pretty good research in a bookstore. You can walk into Barnes & Noble, pull a book off a shelf, sit in a comfortable chair and read a long time, without having to buy anything, not even a cup of coffee. In lieu of a photocopier, like a library would have, you can bring a digital camera and take some pictures of the book pages.

On the Internet, you can enter the Amazon website, pull a book off the “shelf” and read parts of it, too, without having to buy it. (Not every book has a “look inside” or “search inside” capability, but most recent books do, and you can find quite useable resources in this way.) The bookseller hopes that you will like the book so much that you buy it, but you don’t have to. You can do research in high-quality books without having to buy them. On the internet, you can read books at Amazon, at Barnes & Noble, on books.google.com, and on some publishers’ websites.

Both Amazon and Google books limit the number of pages that you can see in any particular book. So it’s a good idea to save what you see. However, you can’t save or print the page in the normal way. It just prints out blank. But you can use a digital camera, or you can use your computer. Press the button on your keyboard that says “Print Screen” (on a laptop, it may be “prt
This does not actually print the screen—rather, it copies it into the computer’s memory. Then you can open Word, or a graphics program such as Paint, and press Control-V to paste it into the program, and then you can save it to disk or print it from there. This process is not quick, but it is something you can do from home.

Another feature of Amazon that can help you research a topic is that Amazon will link you from one book, to other books that people bought at the same time. By following a trail like that, you can accumulate a large list of related books. You can also type your subject into Amazon’s search bar, and Amazon will show you what’s available on that topic, even books that do not necessarily have that term in the title.

If you find a book that is interesting, you have several options:

1) If Amazon lets you view the inside of the book, you can examine the table of contents, and sometimes the text, too, to see if the book meets your needs.

2) If you think it will be very helpful, a good addition to your own library, you can buy the book.

3) You might be able to borrow the book from the GCS library (see above).

4) Or you can borrow the book from a local public library. Most local libraries participate in an interlibrary loan program, usually through the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). Their database (searchable at www.worldcat.org) includes more than 10 million titles, and millions of those can be sent to your local library as an interlibrary loan. Worldcat will also inform you if the book is available at a library near you. Some local libraries charge a small fee to help pay for this service, but almost anything published can be obtained in this way. Ask your reference librarian about interlibrary loan services.

J. Citing your sources

An important part of academic papers is giving credit to your sources. If
you have obtained important facts or quotes from a source, you should give credit to the source. Quotes must be enclosed in quote marks, and the source and page number given. A style manual for term papers will give the details on how this should be done. We recommend Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology, by Nancy Jean Vyhemeister and Terry Dwain Robertson.\footnote{The third edition was published by Zondervan in 2014. Also good book is Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).}


K. Assessment

In GCS courses, as in most other seminaries, grades are based largely on written papers and projects. Papers are assessed by the instructors. As with grading of papers in most other disciplines, there is an unavoidable amount of subjectivity in assigning grades to these papers. Grades are based on the experience the instructors have had with papers from many previous student papers at this and other institutions.

Retake policy: Papers may be rewritten and exams may be taken again only with the permission of the instructor. That is an exceptional circumstance that involves extra work by the instructor and falls under the discretion of the instructor.

L. Verifying student identity

We know many of our students personally. Nevertheless, to provide objective, third-party assurance of academic integrity and student identity, some of our courses require proctored exams. Proctored final exams are required in the following courses: BI501, CH501, CH502, CM502, NT501, TH501, TH505, TH506, TH519 and TM501. Students are allowed to have the exam proctored in either of two ways:
1. Proctoring by video

The student may take the exam while being watched on video, and must provide verification of identity with a government-issued form of identification. Students must have a camera connected to the computer, such that the student can be observed by GCS personnel while the exam is being taken. (The webcam and video connection is not needed at other times, but will need to be tested before the exam, to allow time to resolve problems if they arise.)

a. You must have a camera connected to your computer. Some computers have a camera and microphone built in. Or you may purchase a small webcam with microphone and connect it to the computer. You may purchase a webcam from many electronic stores. If you allow a few weeks for delivery, you can purchase an inexpensive webcam for less than $10 from dx.com. Inexpensive cameras sometimes work best because there are fewer adjustments to make – just plug it in, and it will work, if you have a recent version of Windows. A small number of pixels is often better because it takes less bandwidth.

b. There are various ways to activate a video connection. Both Google and Yahoo offer free video connections; so does vsee.com, skype.com and zoom.us. We can work with any of these – just let us know if you have one of them, and if you don’t, we can help you set one up.

c. We need a color copy of a government-issued photo ID, such as a drivers license. (Most students have already submitted that with their application for admission.) With a scanner or a digital camera, copy the ID and send it to registrar@gcs.edu. Or you may mail a color photocopy to us.

g. Test the video connection to make sure it is working properly. Do this in advance, so that any problems may be resolved before the actual exam begins.

h. For the exam, you will make the video connection before you begin the test. The proctor will communicate with you to confirm that the
connection is working. Then begin the test. You will keep your webcam and microphone on, but the proctor will turn the camera and microphone off. You will no longer be able to see the proctor, but the proctor will still be able to see you. (The proctor may have other work to do at the same time, and we don’t want you to be distracted by what we are doing.) We may record the entire video transmission to watch at a later time, if necessary. This recording will not be used for anything other than academic verification.

i. When the exam is over, just talk to the proctor, and hopefully the proctor will be there to turn the camera and microphone back on and confirm with you that the process has been successful. If the proctor has stepped away from the desk and does not respond, just end the connection, and send us a message saying that you are done.

j. You should alert other people in your home that you are taking a video-proctored exam. This means that they should not interrupt you, and be aware that they are not in visual or verbal privacy.

2. Proctoring with a third party

a. If students do not wish to be proctored by video, they should inform us that they wish to be proctored by a third party. Each student must select a proctor well in advance and verify that the person is willing and able to proctor the exam during the approximate time period in which the exam must be taken.

b. The proctor may be a librarian, a professional educator (a teacher or administrator from primary, secondary or tertiary schools), or an ordained person.

1. The person cannot be related to the student by marriage or by birth. Second cousins and more distant relationships are permitted, as long as the person meets the qualifications mentioned above.

2. The proctor cannot be under the supervision of the student in any capacity, either on the job or in the church. (However, the proctor may be a supervisor over the student.) Senior pastors
cannot be proctored by anyone in the congregations they pastor.

c. One more factor involved in selecting a proctor: The proctor does not have to watch every minute of the test, but must be able to see the computer monitor at all times, and can testify that the student did not access unauthorized materials while taking the exam. (This does not apply if the exam is open-book.)

d. Once the student has identified a possible proctor, the student must send us the proctor’s name, qualification (e.g., teacher or pastor), email address and phone number. The proctor must have an employer-issued email address; accounts at Gmail and Verizon, for example, are not acceptable. We must be able to visit the website that corresponds to the email address of the proctor to verify the identity and validity of the proctor.

e. GCS will then contact the proctor to verify that the person meets the qualifications, and is willing to proctor the exam during the time period that the exam should be completed.

f. GCS will then notify the student whether the proctoring arrangement is acceptable, and if so, will leave it up to the student to set up a more specific time for the exam. This will most likely be done about a week before the exam. The student must then send the instructor and the proctor an email confirming the appointed time, location, and whether you will use your own computer, or one belonging to the proctor.

g. GCS will send further instructions to the proctor.

h. The student will take the exam at the appointed time. Our website records the time and the computer’s IP address.

i. All programs should be closed except for the internet browser and a word-processing program, with only a blank document being open. (Turn off email notifiers, instant messaging, etc.) Unless the exam instructions specifically allow the student to use other websites, only one window or tab may be open on the browser, and that is the GCS website on which the exam is being taken.

j. Some libraries or proctors charge a fee; that is the student’s
responsibility.

k. Even if the proctor knows you personally, you must show a government-issued photo ID, and the proctor must sign a statement that the ID has been shown.
VII. Using Our Website

Most students are able to navigate our website without too much difficulty. If you encounter problems, email us at support@gcs.edu, or phone our technical support department at 1-800-851-2611. Whenever you send us a message, please let us know which browser you are using, what page you were on, and what you were trying to do.

Our public information page (www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23) has a series of illustrated instructions on how to navigate our site. There are step-by-step explanations of how to use documents, forums, assignments, quizzes, and other features of the site. The same information is given below.

Here are some general guidelines:

- At the top of most pages, there are some blue and some black words at the top of the left column, starting with “Home” or “My home.” These are called “bread crumbs,” because they show a pathway of where you are on our web site. You can click on those words to move backwards.

- Right after you log in, you will see a page listing the courses you are currently enrolled in, course announcements, whether you have messages waiting, and upcoming assignments. To go back to that page, click the “My home” link upper left corner.

- When you are viewing a page in a course, click the course code (e.g., NT501) to get back to the course home page.

- If you wish to see the GCS home page, click on “Site home.”
A. Getting started: logging in

After you are accepted to be a student at Grace Communion Seminary, you will be given a user name and a password. This is the electronic key that enables you to see the course materials.

Below is a picture of the GCS home page, showing where you should type in your user name and password:

On the home page you can also see several useful links in the left column, including the Academic Catalog, and some policies that are duplicated in the Catalog.

B. Managing your profile

Please begin by updating your profile. In the upper-right corner of the page you will see your name. Click on that, and one option will be to see your profile. Click there and you will see a page that tells other people about who you are. It looks like this:
In the left column, under “Administration,” click on “edit profile.” (We have circled it in the image above.)

Then you’ll see the top part of the Edit Profile page. To see it all, click on “Expand all” in the upper right corner. We show the expansion on the next page:

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30 Items in the left column can be moved to tabs in a “dock” in the left margin, and if all the items have been moved to the dock, the left column itself disappears. The default is for the left column to be shown, but if you moved these blocks to the “dock,” these items will be hidden in tabs in the upper left margin.
Here you can edit your name, email address, and choose how you want to receive emails from GCS. In “Description,” you can tell people a bit about yourself – your family, occupation, ministry, etc.
There are two ways to share a photo of yourself. Here’s the first method:

1. Go down the profile page until you get to the “User picture” section.

2. Click the “Add” icon in the upper left. (The name of an icon appears if you hold the mouse pointer over it for one or two seconds.)

3. On the left, click “Upload a file.”

4. Click “Choose File.”

5. Navigate through the folder and file structure in your own computer until you find the file you want to upload. Then double-click on the file. You can use the “Save as” box to give it a new name, if you want to.

6. Click “upload this file.”

The second method of uploading a photo is to use Windows Explorer to
“drag and drop” a digital image into the User Picture box:

1. In Windows File Explorer,\(^{31}\) navigate to the folder that contains the file you want to upload. You can also do this from an “Open File” dialog box in Microsoft Word.
2. Click on the file you want to upload and keep holding the mouse button down.
3. “Drag” the file to the tab for your browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari, etc.) that is in the taskbar at the bottom of the screen. Keep the mouse button down.
4. When you position the mouse over the browser icon, the computer will display the browser. Continue holding the mouse button down and drag the file up to the “New Picture” box, where you want the photo to be.
5. Now let go of the mouse button (“drop”) and the file will be uploaded and a thumbnail displayed.

Fill in other fields of the user profile as you wish, and – very important – at the bottom of the page, click “Update profile.” Students and teachers will then be able to see a small photo of you whenever you make a comment in the discussion forum, send a message, or upload an assignment. That helps make the website a little less impersonal.

C. The “My Courses” page

When you first log in, the website displays a “My courses” page, showing you the courses you can access:

\(^{31}\) In some versions of Windows, this is called Windows Explorer. You may need to click the start icon in the lower left corner of the screen, then click on Documents. The icon looks like a manila file folder.
There are several links on this page that you may find useful:

- In the left column, “site home” will take you to the GCS home page. This is the best way to access some introductory documents, such as the schedule for courses. (If this block has been moved to the “dock,” then a “navigation” tab will show in the left margin. Position your mouse over the tab to see its content.)

- The “help” link will take you to the public information section of our site, which includes website instructions.

- The center column shows you which courses you can access, and it gives details about each one, including assignments and due dates. Click on the title of the course to go to the page for that course. You always have access (even without logging in) to the public information/help section.

- In the upper right corner is your name. This link will take you to your profile, where you can change your password and other information about yourself. This area also has a “log out” link. If you are using a public computer, you should log yourself out when you are done, so that no one else can see your pages.

- In the right column, you’ll be notified of any messages waiting for you. Click on the number to go to the message.

D. A sample course page

On the “My courses” page, if you click on the title of the course, you will be taken to the page for that course. Below we show TH502 as an example:
On the left side you can see a navigation panel. Since the course is organized by weeks, this offers a way to jump down to the specific week you want.

In the center we have circled three types of course content:

- The mostly red square is an icon for a PDF document. Most lectures are posted as PDF documents. In this case, we have circled the course syllabus, and below that, the first lecture. The syllabus is always important because it tells you what the course is designed to do, what your assignments are, and other details you may need for the course.
- Just below class 1, we circled an icon that depicts a hand holding a paper. This is where you turn in an assignment. We’ll cover the details of how that is done a bit later.
- The blue-green icon at the bottom shows two overlapping comment boxes. This is the icon for a forum (what some websites call a threaded discussion). This is where students and faculty interact, discussing course content. Since GCS students are spread out in different time zones, we can’t all be online at the same time, so we post our comments, so others can read them at a later time.

E. PDF documents: viewing, saving, printing, enlarging

Most of our lectures are posted as PDF documents. If you click on the name of the document, you should be taken to a new page. Sometimes it takes the browser a few seconds to start up the PDF display mechanism.
Below we show a PDF document – in this case it is the syllabus for TH501, displayed in the Chrome browser. Different browsers will display PDF files a little differently. Note especially the icons in the lower right – *which you may not see unless you move your mouse over that part of the document.* Firefox displays similar icons in the upper right; Internet Explorer puts the icons in the lower center.

- The icon at the left will shrink the document so that an entire page is displayed.
- The second icon will enlarge the document so that it takes up the full width of your frame.
- The next two icons (minus and plus) reduce or enlarge to other sizes. We use 14-point type for most of our documents to make them easier to read, but you have the option of changing the page size if you wish.
- The fifth icon depicts a floppy disk (which is used only on older computers, but the icon is still being used) – this is how you download and save the document to your own computer. You can then open the document in a PDF reader for even more options.
- The last icon depicts a printer – this is one way to print the document. (Keyboard shortcut: press Ctrl and p at the same time.)
- To go back to the course home page, click the “back” arrow on your
browser (upper left), or press Alt and left arrow at the same time.

F. Forum: how to post new comments

Most GCS courses have forums in which students respond to questions given by the instructor, and in which the students interact with one another. This involves several steps, so this section is a little long. We’ll give a picture of the screen at each step, starting with the main page for the course.

In the image above, the entry for the forum is circled. After you click on the name of the forum, you may see a page like the one below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One Discussion Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you say that the Bible is &quot;God in print&quot;? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(There are no discussion topics yet in this forum)

- In some cases, you will see only an initial question, and a link for
“reply.” In such cases, the instructor has set the forum up so that everyone discusses the same topic, and you cannot add new topics. All you can do is to click on “reply.” But if you see a page like shown above, you can add new topics, or at least provide your own title, and you can follow the instructions below.

- At the top you can see the initial question, given by the instructor. Below that, in the left column, under the word “Discussion,” you may see a number of topics that have been added by other students, as shown below (sections have been blurred to protect student privacy).

```
The Atonement in the New Testament
So today I was walking to the pool with Sean, my son-in-law, and my grandson Connor who is 5. Sean said something about Jesus.

"Jesus is invisible," Connor informed us.

"So he is kind of like a superhero, right?" I posed to him.

"No, Jesus is invisible, but he doesn’t live here." He raised both hands above his head - "He lives up in heaven."

I thought of this first chapter in Atonement, as Teresa talks about the mystery of the incarnation and atonement, in that however we try to explain Jesus and the Cross, the fullness eludes us - though Connor has a good start.

So this week just write one or two paragraphs on this forum on one important lesson taken from chapter one. It would be helpful to share what you learn from his teaching on the Old Covenant.
```

- In the center you can see which student (with a picture, if available) started the discussion on that topic (also called a “thread”).
- In the next column you will see how many responses have been given to the topic.
- In the right-most column you can see who made the most recent comment in that topic and when it was.
- If you click on a student’s name, you can send a private message to that person. We’ll show you how to do that a little later.
- For now, we want to start something new, so we will click on the button in the center: “Add a new discussion topic.” After you click, you will see:
You must describe what your comment is – type in a title in the box to the right of the word “Subject.”

Then type your comment into the box labelled “Message.”

You can use the gray icons for boldfacing, italicizing, etc. (You can also use keyboard shortcuts: Ctrl-b, Ctrl-i, Ctrl-u). If you want more formatting options, click the “Show more buttons” icon in the upper left.

If you want to type your comments in Word first (in order to check grammar and spelling, for example), you can do that.

In Word, highlight what you want to copy. Press Ctrl-a if you want to highlight everything in your document.

Press Ctrl-c to copy.

Come back to your browser.

Click in the message box and press Ctrl-v to paste.

You can put pictures in your comments, though this is rarely done. Click on the icon in the right part of the top row that depicts a mountain and sun. After clicking on “Browse repositories,” you can upload a picture here in the same way that you uploaded one for your profile page.

The default setting is that you will be subscribed to the discussion. That is, you’ll get an email whenever anyone else makes a comment there. You can turn this off if you wish.
In the bottom section, you can also attach a document. Click on the “Add…” icon in the upper left. The instructions are similar to uploading an assignment, which we will cover shortly. You may need to do this if you are uploading an assignment for other students to read and comment on.

At the bottom of the page, you can choose to “Mail now.” That may sometimes be helpful if you are having a conversation with another student on line. If you do not check that box, the email will go out 30 minutes later. During that 30 minutes, you may also edit your comments.

The most important part of the page is the button at the bottom: “Post to forum.” If you click on it and nothing happens, perhaps you have forgotten to type in a subject, which is a required field.

G. Forum: reply to a comment

The forum is a place for student discussions. “Discussion” means that you are not just posting your own comments — you are also responding to what other students have written. Let’s go back to the forum page:
Circled above is the name or “subject” of one of the discussion topics. (Several topics have been given similar names – it is helpful to be a little more descriptive.) If we click on it, we’ll see what others have written (the text is intentionally blurred):

- In this example, one student has posted a comment, and another has
responded to that topic. Notice that the second comment is slightly indented (or nested) to show that it is a response. If a third person responds to the response, it will be indented yet a little more. That’s because the forum is set at the top center to “Display replies in nested form.” You can change that if you want to.

- At the top right, you’ll see an option to subscribe, or if you are already subscribed to the forum, it will say “subscribed.”
- Also at the top are navigation links to other threads in this forum: to the left is “Lesson from Chap. 1”; to the right is “The Instrument of the Covenant.”
- You will see “edit” and “delete” only for your own comments.
- At the end of the first comment is the word “reply.” Below the first response is also the word “reply.” If you scroll down the page, you’ll see that every subsequent response in the discussion thread has the word “reply.”
  - You need to choose which comment you are replying to. If you are interacting with the original posting, then click on its “reply.”
  - If you are interacting with a later comment, click on the “reply” at the end of that one.
  - That way the website will know where to display your comment, and other people can see where you have entered the conversation, and what you are referring to.
- If you click on “reply,” you’ll see the text you are replying to, and links to other comments that have been made in this thread.
The website automatically fills in the “subject” box. However, you can change it if you want to.

Type your message into the large box, just as you did to make your initial comment.

Last, be sure scroll to the bottom and click “post to forum.”

H. Forum: send a private message

Let’s go back to the forum page and look at columns 2 and 4. They display the names of other students in your class. If you want to send them a private message that is NOT posted on the forum for everyone else to see, you can click on their name.

After you click on the name, you’ll see the person’s profile.

In this case the person has posted their email address, and you could
email them. However, not all students post an email address on their profile. To use the GCS website to send a message, click on “Send a message. If you have sent messages to that person before, you’ll see the history of your communications. There will be a box at the bottom of the page:

Type your message into the box, and click on “Send message.” It will post it on the website (only they can see it) AND send them an email. You cannot format the text or attach files.

1. **Upload a new assignment**

Now let’s walk through the steps involved in uploading an assignment, such as a paper you have written. This will take a few steps (the multiple steps are designed for security, so that no one else can see your assignment). Let’s start at the course home page:
Circled above is the name of the assignment. Click on those words and you will see a page with the assignment name, due date, etc.

This page may look slightly different in different assignments and courses, depending on the length of the description given by the instructor. Click on “Add submission” and you’ll see the next page:
Your first step will be to locate the file in your computer that you want to submit to the course.

- You can use “drag and drop” to upload the file. Find the document in Windows File Explorer (a Word “File Open” box also works). Put your mouse over the file, and while holding the left button down, move the mouse to the taskbar (usually at the bottom of the page) to the browser icon. Once your mouse is over that tab, the browser should display. Still holding the left button down, move the mouse up to the drag-and-drop box on the assignment upload area. Then release the mouse button.

You can also use the step-by-step method:
- Click on the “Add” icon (circled above). You will then see the File picker:
Click on “Choose File” (If you don’t see it, you may need to click on “Upload a file,” on the left.) When you click on Choose File, you’ll see a Windows File Explorer dialog box. Navigate in your computer until you find the folder where your file is stored. There are three ways to select the file:
  
  o double-click on the name of the file.
  
  o click on the name of the file, then hit Enter on the keyboard.
  
  o click on the name of the file, then click the Open button.

The name of your document is then loaded into the file picker:
You have the option of giving the file a new name, by typing something in the “Save as” box. If your last name is in the name of the file, for example, it will make it easier for your instructor to keep track of whose file is whose. Click on “Upload this file” and you’ll be back at the GCS assignment page. The name of your file (or part of it) will be displayed in the box:

Click on “Save changes” and you are (almost) done! The website will display a confirmation page. This gives you a chance to make changes. Be sure that you are submitting the correct file(s).
J. Retrieve a graded assignment

After your instructor has graded your paper (allow one week after the due date), your grade will be posted. In some cases the instructor will type general comments about the paper in a message box. In other cases detailed comments will be inside the Word document itself. (If you cannot read Word files, or if you cannot see any comments, let the instructor know, so that the comments will be saved in some other format, such as PDF.)

When the paper is uploaded to the course website, you will also be sent an email to let you know that it has been graded. The email will not include any grades or response files. The email will provide a link, which will take you to the page shown below.

Or you may start at the course home page, and click on the name of the assignment. You will see the confirmation data, just as you did when you submitted the assignment. Below that, you will see the grade, instructor comments, and any file the instructor has uploaded for you to view:

32 In “read” view, redline edits will not be seen. Use “Print Layout” view.
To download the file to your own computer, click on the file. Depending on how you have told your computer to handle such documents, a small box may pop up to ask you how to save the file. Navigate in your computer to the folder you want the file to be in, and click “Save.”

K. Send a message to your instructor

We prefer that all course-related messages be sent by using the website, rather than email, so all course content can be found in one place, and can be archived together. To make it easier to send a message to your instructor, every course home page has a “Message my professor” in the right-hand column:

![Image of a web page with a message box]

When you click the instructor’s name, a simple message box will pop up:
Type your message into the box, then click “Send.” An email will be sent to the instructor. Some of our instructors work only part-time, and may not be able to check their messages every day. If the instructor has not responded within 48 hours, please email registrar@gcs.edu and we can find out if there’s a problem.

L. Taking a quiz

Some of our courses have quizzes – sometimes multiple choice and sometimes short essay questions. Your instructor will tell you whether you can use a Bible, books and/or notes. Here we show part of the page for NT504:

The icon for a quiz looks like a sheet of paper with a big red check mark on it. If we click on the title of the quiz, here’s what we’ll see:
This introductory page gives instructions about the quiz, and some of the parameters involved, such as how much time you are allowed to take, whether you can take the quiz over again, and if so, how the grade is calculated. You can view this page ahead of time, without actually starting the quiz.

When you click on “Attempt quiz now,” you will get a confirmation page to make sure you want to proceed:

After you click “Start attempt,” you will see the quiz itself:
In the upper left corner of the quiz is a navigation panel. This shows at a glance how many questions are in the quiz, and where you are in the quiz. The black boxes show which questions are on the page you are on. Unless the instructor has disabled this feature, you can jump back and forth to any question by clicking on its number.

The navigation panel also shows you how much time you have left to take the quiz.

On a multiple-choice quiz, click in the small circle to the left of the correct answer. If you are not sure and would like to come back to the question later, then click on “Flag question.”

To submit each question and to find out how you did, click “Check.” (If “Check” does not appear, your quiz does not allow it.) Depending on how the instructor has set up the quiz, you may be able to try again if you
selected the wrong answer on the first attempt.

At the end of each page, click “Next.” When you are all done, you’ll see a summary. It will let you know if any questions have been flagged:

At the bottom of the page, if you are done, click “Submit all and finish.” You will have to confirm this on a small pop-up window. Then you will see the graded results:
This page tells you how many questions you got right, and your overall score. Pink designates incorrect answers, and the correct answers are shown in highlighted rectangles. The website grades all multiple choice and true-false answers, but the essay questions have to be graded by the instructor. That may take up to a week after the due date.

M. Seeing your grades

How are you doing so far? It’s good to check the website to make sure that what we have is what we are supposed to have. So go back to the course home page, and look at the bottom of the left column. (You may need to scroll down to see it). (In some cases, material that is normally in the left column will have been moved to tabs in the left margin – note the icons in the upper right corner of the Navigation block – but the default is for it to be displayed in the left column.)
The icon for grades is a square depicting a spreadsheet. Click on the word “Grades” and you’ll see how you have done so far. It shows your grades – and no one else’s:
Every course will have a different grade structure. This one is organized into categories: forums, quizzes, and papers. You can see the overall score on each assignment, a percentage score, and the way it totals when weighted according to the importance of the categories. If the instructor has typed comments into the website, you can also see those. You can also see where scores are missing entirely – that might be something to ask about.
N. **Asking questions**

If the course has a general discussion forum, you can use it to post a new topic. See above for instructions on how to add a topic to a forum. Using the discussion forum makes the question and the answer available to other students, too.

If you need to ask a question privately, or there is no public discussion forum, you can send a message directly to the professor. In the right-hand column of the course page, click on your instructor’s name under “Message My Professor.”

O. **Problems with messages**

When the instructor or other students post comments on the discussion forum, you should automatically receive an email copy. If you sometimes don’t get messages sent to your email when other people post to a forum or message you on the site, there are a few things you can do to help:

1. **Check your email spam folder**, and in Gmail, the “promotions” folder. Sometimes messages get flagged as spam even if they aren’t. (Your email provider might be able to discern that a computer sent the message.) You may be able to adjust your email settings to prevent GCS mail from being flagged as spam.

2. Always logout when you leave. Messages may not be sent to email when the site thinks you are online. Click Logout at the top or bottom of the page; that tells the site you are leaving.

3. Change your message settings in your profile. By default, the site sends messages only if it detects you are inactive for 10 minutes.
   - Click your name at the top or the bottom of the page to display your profile.
   - In the lower-left corner, click the Messaging link.
   - Make sure that the correct boxes are checked.
   - Click the Update Profile button.
VIII. Courses Offered

Almost all of our courses are three-unit courses. For more details on each course, including textbooks, schedule, and assignments, see the short syllabi. Links to those syllabi are posted on our website at www.gcs.edu/course.

Each course is designed to require a student to work between 135 and 150 hours (i.e., about 12 hours each week) for satisfactory attainment of the course objectives. This includes the time it takes to read the lectures and textbooks, participate in online discussions, research and write papers, and study for and take exams. Most students report that it takes slightly more time than what we have estimated.

A short syllabus is posted for each course, so students can see how the course is structured before they register. However, the required textbooks mentioned in each syllabus are not necessarily the textbooks that will be required the next time the course is offered. The short syllabi are updated about two weeks before registration begins, so please wait until then to print the syllabi or to purchase the textbooks. International students may need to order the books further in advance, and should check with the instructor to see if any textbook changes are being considered.

GCS does not sell any of the textbooks – they must be obtained from elsewhere. The website www.bookfinder.com may help students locate discount prices for the books.

Following are the courses that we offer, with brief descriptions and the student learning outcomes.

33 Exception: Independent study courses may vary from one to four units.
A. Biblical Studies

**BI501 Hermeneutics**  
Dr. Michael Morrison

This course surveys various methods of analyzing the biblical text, gives a brief introduction to using biblical Greek, and discusses how to use various forms of analysis in exploring the original meaning and contemporary applications of biblical passages.

Through this course, students will…

1. Describe three major areas of focus for a systematic study of the biblical text: the historical setting, the literary setting, and the setting of the reader.

2. Describe scholarly critical methods of study, including those focusing on the history behind the text, the literary composition of the text, and the role of the reader in grasping the meaning.

3. Describe the structure of biblical Greek, enough so that the student is able to use lexicons, concordances, and understand basic grammatical terms used in exegetical commentaries.

4. Learn to analyze biblical texts using various Bible-study websites, with awareness of the limitations of the resources.

5. Analyze the philosophical foundations of hermeneutics, including the question of where “meaning” is to be sought.


**BT501 Pentateuch**  
Dr. John McKenna

This course presents the formation of the People of God according to the confession of the Five Books of Moses. The history of Israel as the People of God belongs to the nature of the Biblical Covenanted Relationship (BCR) posited by
the Great I-AM the Lord God is as the Redeemer-Creator of the Creation. A theological apprehending of the texts will be explained in the prophetic Spirit of the Voice of this Lord and God, according to Moses.

1. The student will describe the nature of the Biblical Covenant Relationship (BCR) and on the formation of its foundation, will identify the ontological and epistemological dimensions of this relationship in the Biblical World.

2. The student will articulate a doctrine of God according to the foundation and formations of the people of God as laid down in the Five Books of Moses.

3. The student will explain the nature of Divine Freedom of the Redeemer as the Creator and of the Creator as the Redeemer is unfolded in the dynamic between Himself and Israel among the nations in His Creation.

4. The student will also describe the role of the Ancient Near East in relationship with the Revelation of God with Moses as the Prophet of Israel.

5. The student will describe the relationship between the nature of the BCR and the God of Moses with the peoples of the Ancient Near East and their gods, in order to identify the uniqueness and the singular intent and purpose of the Lord of their history in the world.

**BT502 Prophets**  
Developed by John McKenna; edited and administered by Dr. Tim Finlay

This course studies the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Canon, the Former and Latter Prophets in order to grasp the foundation and formation of the Kingdom of God. We will seek to apprehend the establishment and development of the Monarchy with Ancient Israel as moved by the renewal of the Biblical Covenant Relationship that we are taught by the Prophets.

1. To describe the formation of the people of God into and during the monarchy of Israel’s history among the nations in God’s creation: the periods of Joshua, Judges, and the kings, and the fall of the people first to the Assyrian Empire and then to Babylonians.
2. To compare the messianic vision of the Hebrew Prophets with the messianic hope of the Kingdom of God expressed through the form and content of the Psalter of Israel’s worship.

3. To analyze the structure of each of the books of the former and latter prophets.

4. To describe the relationship of Israel’s House of David to the hope of the kingdom of God with Israel and its function as Israel’s hope, beyond the judgment of the Judge, into its witness to the eschatological fulfillment of the biblical covenant relationship (BCR) in the biblical world.

5. To evaluate the nature of apocalyptic ideas in relation to messianic hope and the development of the eschatology in history and prophetic vision with Israel in her BCR with the Lord God that the Great I-AM is.

6. To analyze the nature of the BCR and its significance in the light and word of the fulfillment of its witness to the person of the messianic King, the Lord Jesus Christ, Priest, Prophet, and Sage of the kingdom of God.

**BT503 The Writings**

Dr. John McKenna

We will study the third division of the canon of the Hebrew Bible, called the Writings, according to Judaism’s Masoretic tradition, in relationship to the five books of Moses and the Former and Latter Prophets. The three divisions of the canon work together to witness to the revelation of the Lord God with his people in his creation today.

Students will…

1. Describe the form and content of the various books of *The Writings*.

2. Analyze the relationship of the Third Division of the Hebrew Bible to the Prophets and the Five Books of Moses of the Hebrew canon.
3. Describe the contribution the Writings make to a doctrine of the revelation of the word of God in the history of the world, as part of a doctrine of inspiration.

4. Analyze the form and content of the individual books of Israel’s worship in the biblical covenanted relationship (BCR) as the messianic hope in the messianic King of the kingdom of God in the world. Not only will we look at the form and content of each book, we will look at it in its canonical context, as part of the covenanted relationship of God with his people.

5. Identify the role of the office of the King-Priest, Prophet-Sage, of the Person of the I-AM the Lord God is among the nations of the Ancient Near East.

6. Describe the nature of the eschatological King David and the apocalypse of his reign over his kingdom among the nations of the world. The covenant relationship of God and his people cannot be understood without seeing where it leads.

7. To describe the history of Israel as prophecy among the nations in God’s creation, the self-witness of the Lord God to the revelation the I-AM HE IS for his people even in our times today. God was using the Israelite nations to reveal himself to the world, and we can still learn from this history.

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B. Church History

CH501 Church History: The First Millennium
Neil Earle, M.A., M.A.

Church History: The First Millennium is a survey of the events, people, and ideas of Christianity from Jesus’ ascension to the Great Schism of 1054. The focus is on mastering the key dates and events of the period as well as introducing the student to the writings, thought and theology of key people from this period.

1. Student Learning Outcome 1: Learn to identify the key events and ideas of
the first one thousand years of Church History with a sense of when the core events took place. Success for this objective will be determined through a short answer/multiple choice quiz and a proctored final exam.

2. Student Learning Outcome 2: studying how issues around Christology and the Holy Spirit led key thinkers to defend and deepen the Church’s understanding of the Incarnate Christ, especially at Nicea and Chalcedon.

3. Student Learning Outcome 3: By studying “real time” responses of church leaders and thinkers students learn to articulate their experience of Christ working with them. A student response paper completes that objective. Also, five Online Discussions will help grade students on their thoughtful “real time” reflection on specific people, ideas, and events that reflect the Holy Spirit’s work in people across through history.

4. Student Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrating how church leaders and thinkers wrote from a pastoral perspective within a Trinitarian-Incarcational framework. Lecture 5 interacts with St. Patrick, the two Augustines, Bede of Jarrow and such pastoral/missional figures as Pope Gregory the Great. In-class activities such as videos on Patrick, Augustine and Bede enhance this outcome.

CH502 Church History: The Second Millennium
Neil Earle, M.A., M.A.

This course surveys the Christian Church from the time of the Crusades (1095) down to today's latest renewal movements. “The Church reformed must always reform itself” is a central theme. It addresses the Western Church at the height of its power, the crisis that triggered the Reformation and the “great ideas” of Luther and Calvin. It examines the Enlightenment, modern Scientism, and pivotal American experience. Culture, theology, and grass-roots spirituality are seen as constantly interacting in this broad overview.

1. Identify the key events and ideas of the Church’s second millennium and be able to give the order in which the events took place. Success for this outcome will be determined through a short quiz, online discussions and a
proctored final exam.

2. Explain how the Holy Spirit led men and women to access the power of God amid so much outward turmoil and confusion. Success for this outcome will be determined through a 2-5 page formal report of books on the list of additional required texts.

3. Describe the major differences between the various Christian traditions.

4. Analyze events from an Incarnational Trinitarian perspective. Success for this outcome will be determined through a two-page reflection paper.

C. Christian Ministry

CM501 Ministerial Leadership
Dr. Russell Duke

This course develops concepts of knowing oneself and developing plans for growth in relational skills for service in ministry. Practical concepts of personal mission and development of leadership traits, communication and problem-solving skills are examined. This course is a prerequisite for the Pastoral Leadership course and a required course for our master’s degrees.

1. Students will express sound principles for decision-making and problem-solving relative to scriptural instructions and examples for new Covenant Christians.

2. Students will analyze how to live in the centrality of the Incarnation rather than in religiosity.

3. Students will analyze how one’s temperament affects close relationships with God and family and create a strategy to improve relationships in ministry.

4. Students will evaluate one’s most favored spiritual disciplines and those
most needed to balance one’s spiritual life.

5. Students will evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses in ministry service and create strategies to strengthen leadership in ministry.

CM502 Pastoral Leadership
Dr. Russell Duke

This course studies transformational leadership in the first century church. The use of power and influence in management and leadership techniques of Jesus and Paul are studied. Organizational principles, strategies for ministry, situational leadership, and mentoring will be included. Prerequisite: CM501.

1. Students will identify and develop a biblical foundation of transformational leadership for today’s ministry by analyzing the leadership of Jesus Christ.

2. Students will articulate a theological foundation for transformational leadership for their ministry in today’s culture through synthesizing transformational theology.

3. Students will evaluate the effect of modeling Trinitarian love, grace, and communion in the Body of Christ and the world.

4. Students will create a strategic plan based on organizational principles and strategies in Jesus’ ministry and apply them to their own ministry.

5. Students will create a plan to counteract the dark side of leadership.

CM503 Christian Counseling
Ted Johnston, M.A., M.A.

This course examines a multi-disciplinary approach to counseling, which draws upon insights from Scripture; Incarnational Trinitarian theology; and psychology regarding God, humanity (including sin, human change and well-being) and Christian ministry. Application of these insights is then made to the practice of short-term, church-based counseling ministries that participate effectively, through
the Holy Spirit, in the ongoing counseling ministry of Jesus Christ. Students will:

1. Explain the dynamics of the counseling process and the importance of those dynamics in short-term, church-based, Christian counseling.

2. Describe how to participate in the ministry of Jesus, “the wonderful counselor” as he, through the Holy Spirit, brings about change in the life of the counselee.

3. Define the nature and scope of the counseling role of pastors and other ministers as they participate in this healing ministry of Jesus.

4. Define and pursue the qualifications and skills necessary to be an effective Christian counselor in a local church setting.

5. Explain the presuppositions (worldview) consistent with an Incarnational-Trinitarian and multi-disciplinary approach to Christian counseling.

6. Explain the ethical foundations of an appropriate, short-term, church-based Christian counseling ministry, including such critical issues as making referrals and establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries.

**CM504 Practice of Ministry**

Developed by Jonathan Stepp; edited by Dr. Michael Morrison; administered by Dr. Larry Hinkle

This course is designed to help the student think about who Jesus is for humanity in his ministry to the Father and to the world in the communion of the Holy Spirit. That understanding is applied to the practice of preaching, worship, evangelism, discipleship, and the administration of the Church.

1. Explain who Jesus is for humanity, and how that informs their understanding of ministry.

2. Validate and revise their ministry strategies and activities based on the vicarious humanity of Jesus.
Success for these two outcomes will be determined through three two-page reflection papers on each of the assigned text books for the class in which the student explores how his or her ministry practices have been confirmed and/or revised by thinking about the topics raised by the authors in these books.

Success for this outcome will also be determined through a seven-page research paper, due at the end of the course, in which the student researches the practice of a specific ministry within another Christian context outside of his or her own context and explores how his or her ministry practices have been confirmed and/or revised by this research.

3. Identify the practical aspects of actual ministry activities such as baptism, communion, counseling, etc.

4. Describe the meaning of church ceremonies in light of the student’s understanding of who Jesus is for humanity.

Success for this outcome will be determined through four two-page reflection papers due at the end of the course. Two of the reflection papers will be in response to the ideas discussed in two Lectures of the student’s choice and two will be in response to the ideas discussed in two of the Audio Files of the student’s choice.

**CM505 Women in Leadership**

Course developed by Pat Shaw, M.A.R.; edited and administered by Dr. Michael Morrison with assistance from Sheila Graham, M.A.R., M.A.R.

This course explores the issue of women serving as leaders in the church. Students will identify the historical place of women in Jewish, Greek and Roman societies through the time of Jesus and then within the early church. Discussion will include how the role of women as church leaders and its challenges has developed from the early church until today.

1. Describe the historical and biblical background of women as leaders in connection with the cultural, scholarly or patriarchal decisions that have governed the acceptance or rejection among the various eras where women
have filled or not filled office. This will be the focus of the lectures and will form one component of the final paper.

2. Summarize the primary theological controversies that dominate the academic study of women in leadership. This will be expressed in the Review/Reflection papers and the final paper.

3. Analyze arguments and identify whether they are persuasive, inadequate, or whether they merit further investigation. This will be considered in the papers and online comments written by the students.

4. Evaluate how women and men did and/or can collaborate in leadership to the church and describe the argument from both sides of the question. This will be the focus of the final paper.

5. Using an online forum, students will summarize their observations of the current lecture topic tactfully and with supporting evidence. The instructor will participate in the online discussion and provide additional guidance.

**CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry**

Course developed by Greg Williams and Ted Johnston; administered by Dr. Greg Williams, with assistance from Dr. Jeff McSwain.

This course examines the relationship of theology and youth ministry practice as it has developed in North America. The course explores the centrality of Jesus in all ministry in the relationship that Jesus already has with young people. That relationship is explored in its post-Christian, postmodern cultural context, with an emphasis on the importance of mentoring as a relational/incarnational tool in youth ministry.

1. Students will identify and describe an approach to youth ministry that is expressive of a theology of ministry that is Trinitarian, Christ-centered and incarnational. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions and the short reflection paper.

2. Students will describe the history of youth ministry in North America and the trending of North American culture toward post-Christendom and post-
modernity. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions and in the final paper.

3. Students will describe how these historical/cultural forces impact the contemporary practice of youth ministry. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions.

4. Students will compare an *Incarnational, Trinitarian* approach to youth ministry to other approaches. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions, including reporting on a visit to an existing youth ministry program in the student’s community.

5. Students will design a youth ministry program that is faithful to a Trinitarian, Incarnational theology in their particular ministry setting. This outcome will be demonstrated in the final paper, which sets forth the student’s assessment of current youth ministry programming and their proposal for the redesign of that programming.

**CM507 Experiencing the Trinity**

Dr. Larry Hinkle

This course studies spiritual formation. Participation is required in a three-day retreat that presents students with the opportunity to come to know God more intimately through silence, solitude, meditative prayer, communion, worship, and other spiritually formative activities. This retreat experience is informed by a study of the dynamic of these practices as they relate to Scripture and the call of the Triune God to know him better.

After participating in the 70-hour retreat and completing the assigned pre-retreat and post-retreat coursework, students will accomplish the outcomes below. Each outcome will be assessed by means of forum discussions, reaction papers, retreat participation, and the final paper.

1. Analyze the dynamics of a spiritual formation retreat experience within a Trinitarian perspective and the development of a Trinitarian hermeneutic.

2. Identify spiritual formation practices in the context of the student’s personal
temperament through taking a spiritual temperament inventory and experiencing spiritually formative exercises historically employed by the Church.

3. Evaluate their personal relationship with the Triune God through an experience of the Father’s loving embrace, the Son’s call to intimacy, and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment by means of a retreat experiential focus on each member of the Godhead.

4. Explain the participatory nature of mission (missio Dei) from a Trinitarian perspective by means of a study of the way Jesus carried out his ministry with the Father and through the Holy Spirit.

5. Articulate the value and importance of the principles of Sabbath rest and retreat in Christian spirituality through both reading on the subject and the experiencing of a focused time of both physical and spiritual rest in the context of a three-day retreat framework.

**CM508 Church Planting and Development**  
Randy Bloom, M.Div.

This course explores the practical application of starting new churches centered on God, led by the Spirit, culturally relevant, sharing the gospel and making disciples of Jesus. We will teach principles and practices of pastoral leadership to those who hear a call to plant or re-plant congregations.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate the role of church planting within the framework of Trinitarian theology and the church’s participation in Jesus’ mission to the world. This outcome will be addressed in Lesson 1 and a textbook book. This outcome will be verified in the student’s “Church Planting and Jesus’ Mission” paper.

2. Evaluate their personal characteristics and competencies related to planting a church. This outcome will be addressed in Lesson 2 and a textbook; it will be verified in the student’s “Church Planter Characteristics” paper.
3. Describe various types of models for church planting and explain which model best suits their personal characteristics and context. This outcome will be addressed in Lesson 2 and a textbook. This outcome will be verified in the student’s “Church Planting Models” paper.

4. Develop a New Church Proposal – a strategic plan for starting a new church – that includes:

   2. A description of a focus group or community
   3. A description of a launch team including specific ministries necessary for launch.
   4. A general plan and timeline leading up to a church plant launch.
   5. A Discipleship Pathway including key ministries needed to start a new church.
   6. An estimated budget for a starting a new church.

This outcome will be addressed in several lectures and books. This outcome will be verified in the student’s “Focus Group” paper and final project.

**CM510 Polity of Grace Communion International**

Dr. Greg Williams and Dr. J. Michael Feazell

This course is designed to help students understand denominational life and polity within Grace Communion International. We give the student an overview of the church’s history, its leaders, and its theological journey. The primary objective is to help the student understand the culture and organizational structure and ably function within the denominational system.

1. Students will identify the impact and imprint of Incarnational Trinitarian theology on Grace Communion International.

2. Students will survey church polities across the age of the church and identify the particular polity traits of GCI.

3. Students will analyze key transformative events that have led to and shaped the present-day configuration of GCI.
4. Students will analyze GCI’s historical and current use of broadcast, print and social media.

5. Students will contrast the historical with the current culture and administration of GCI.

CM511 Homiletics
Dr. Dan Rogers

This course surveys various methods of analyzing the biblical text in order to develop an expository sermon. This course involves peer and instructor evaluation of sermon outlines prepared by the student and a sermon given by the student to a congregation, with responses by an ecclesiastical supervisor and the instructor. **Prerequisite:** BI501 Hermeneutics or New Testament Background prior to 2015.

Through this course, students will:

1. Exegete selected pericopes according to the historical and cultural settings of the texts

2. Analyze and describe how the pericopes relate to God, Jesus Christ, and salvation and their application for faithful living today.

3. Utilize their exegited pericopes to produce sermon outlines and sermons to be used in a congregation for the biblical education and spiritual edification of the church attendees.

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NT501 New Testament Background
Dr. Michael Morrison

This course explores the cultural background of the New Testament, including
Jewish history, literature and religion, and Gentile culture and religion, so that students might interpret the writings in their original context. This course also covers matters that involve the entire New Testament: canonization, textual transmission, and chronology.

1. Describe important aspects of Jewish history and culture that provide the setting in which the events of the New Testament occurred.

2. Outline basic features of Greco-Roman religions and culture, in which the early church spread the message of Jesus.

3. Describe the way the New Testament was canonized and copied.

4. Give an overview of the chronology of NT events.

5. Analyze how this background information can lead to a better understanding of the New Testament and its message.

**NT502 Gospels**
Dr. Michael Morrison

This course examines the four canonical Gospels to see what each of these four portraits of Jesus tells us. Students will explore the literary and theological relationships between the Gospels, and the major themes each one presents. Students will describe how the teachings of Jesus can be used in our very different circumstances today.

1. Describe scholarly proposals about the literary relationships between the Synoptic Gospels.

2. List the distinctive teachings of each of the four Gospels, and describe how each contributes to a more complete picture of who Jesus was, and what he said and did.

3. Explain the challenges involved in using the Gospels as sources of historical information, and give a reasoned response to the challenges.

4. Analyze a passage in the Gospels in light of its historical and literary setting,
to describe its message for the original readers.

5. Describe the cultural and theological differences between Jesus’ circumstances and our own, and explain how his teachings are useful in the church today despite those differences.

**NT503 Acts of the Apostles**  
Developed by Dr. Russell Duke; edited and administered by Dr. Dan Rogers

This course chronicles the characters and events in the book of Acts to study the early development of the Christian church from its Jewish base to the inclusion of all peoples. The lives of the Apostle Peter and Apostle Paul set the background for studies of the General Epistles and Pauline Epistles.

1. Students will exegete passages in Acts based on the culture of the event and audience in order to relate the message to today’s culture.

2. Students will exegete narrative and sermons in Acts paying close attention to structure and plot, theological perspectives and themes.

3. Students will analyze and reflect on the work of God, the Holy Spirit, in his action in establishing the early church and see application for the work of the Spirit in the Body of Christ today.

4. Students will evaluate how the book of Acts illuminates the spiritual pilgrimage of the individual believer and guides the development of today’s congregation.

**NT504 Epistles of Paul**  
Dr. Michael Morrison

Students in this course examine the 13 letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament. Students will learn the circumstances in which each letter was written – the problems Paul was attempting to address and the way he responded to them. Lectures will include questions of date and authorship, theological considerations involved in what Paul wrote, and how students can find modern significance in
these letters. After this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how Paul’s letters fit into the sequence of his missionary travels.
2. Give the circumstances of each letter, and explain how those circumstances affected the way that Paul wrote.
3. Describe how different sections of each letter are related to other parts of the same letter.
4. Describe how a selected passage in these letters may be used in theology and ministry today.

E. Theology

TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ
Developed by Dr. Russell Duke; edited and administered by Dr. J. Michael Feazell

This course studies the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the two natures of Jesus Christ as human and God against the backdrop of biblical revelation and inspiration from the writing of the texts to the canonization of the New Testament. Here are the course objectives:

1. Articulate the importance of theology and its place in the first-century church.
2. Analyze the historical development of Christian doctrine on biblical revelation and inspiration.
3. Explain the development of the Christian canon as it relates to the early church’s understanding of God and Jesus Christ.
4. Explain theological controversies in the early church regarding the triune nature of God.
5. Identify conflicting perspectives in the early church regarding the two
natures of Jesus Christ.

6. Exegete biblical passages foundational to the doctrine of the Trinity.

7. Identify appropriate definitions of theological terms used in the study of the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

8. Compare and contrast the doctrine of God as Trinity as expressed within Incarnational Trinitarian theology with other held Christian positions.

9. Articulate Incarnational Trinitarian theology on the nature of the union of humanity and Jesus Christ.

**TH502 Nature of Humanity and Salvation**  
Dr. Russell Duke

This course studies the nature of human beings, of evil, and the inherent effects of sin. The work of Christ in salvation history is central. Issues of predestination and the order of salvation are studied. Students will:

1. Express the Christian worldview of the early church in matters of theology on the nature of humanity and sin, the work of Christ, and salvation.

2. Describe God’s plan of salvation through Jesus in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

3. Engage the fundamental questions of God’s sovereignty which faith addresses and which Christian theology seeks to answer.

4. Reflect about one’s faith in order to better apply Christian teaching to personal life and to enable one to give a more coherent account of one’s convictions.

5. Analyze and evaluate a particular theological position.
TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology  
Dr. J. Michael Feazell

This course covers the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Christian understanding of the church, and Christian teaching about biblical eschatology.

Course Student Learning Outcome: Develop and express a personal position on the person and work of the Holy Spirit in human spiritual transformation, the role of the Church in the life of the believer and biblical eschatology in its redemptive setting.

Course Objective 1: To reflect on course readings and lectures in writing three academic papers from a Trinitarian context on the following topics:
2. The role of the church in the life of the Christian believer.
3. The redemptive essence of biblical eschatology.

Course Objective 2: To enter into weekly discussion with other students in the course to share ideas, concepts and reflections on the course readings and lectures.

Course Objective 3: To become familiar with Christian doctrine and teachings on the Holy Spirit, the church, and with Christian views on eschatology.

TH504 Scientific Theology of T.F. Torrance  
Dr. John McKenna

This course introduces the work of Thomas F. Torrance, the great Edinburgh theologian. We will study his theology in the light of the covenanted relationship between God, humanity, and the world and the actual nature of the relationship that exists between Christian theology and natural science. We look at his contribution to the Church’s understanding and announcement of the kingdom of God in our time.
1. To describe the biblical and dogmatic theology with which Professor Torrance sought to champion a ground upon which Christianity is called to stand to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God in the history of God’s creation.

2. To explain the way in which the Christian Church is made able to stand and understand, in the name of Jesus Christ, the word of God as the revelation of the Trinity the Great I-AM is, as the Lord and God of his people among the nations in the history of the creation.

3. We will synthesize the conclusion that the word of God as this One Redeemer-Creator is the source of all truth, the truth of God and his revelation, the truth of humanity and our destiny with him, and the truth of the nature of the universe as his creation to describe, with increasing clarity, the impact of this revelation and apply its relevance to us in our time.

TH505 Doctrine of the Trinity
Dr. Gary Deddo

This course explores in depth the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, with its biblical foundations in God's revelation, the nature of theology, the foundational historic creeds and controversies, key elements and current obstacles to a fully Christian faith in the Triune God. This course examines vital implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for ethics, worship, the church and proclamation of the Gospel of the Grace of God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit.

1. Explain the topics noted in the Description a) in the light of Scripture, b) in the light of its expressions in the relevant ecumenical creeds, and c) in contemporary contexts (assessed through readings and lectures accounted for in reading notebook).

2. Explain the challenges of theological method and identify the important interplay of cultural-historical context (assessed through readings and lectures accounted for in reading notebook).

3. Critically analyze and evaluate a variety of theological formulations of the theological topics under consideration recognizing the interplay of ecumenical and contextual/intercultural perspectives (assessed through written assignments and final exam).
4. Critically evaluate competing theological formulations and bring to written articulation a faithful presentation of key theological themes that will inform their own ministry, preaching, teaching and personal lives as members of the Body of Christ in its local and global expressions (assessed through written assignments and final exam).

TH506 Pauline Theology
Dr. Michael Morrison

This course examines Paul’s letters to learn about the theological insights that were involved in Paul’s written responses to the churches’ various circumstances. Lectures will discuss theological topics that span all of Paul’s letters; students will examine a topic in one or more letters. Prerequisite: Epistles of Paul.

1. Describe the basic contours of Paul’s theology, and how his theological convictions formed the basis for his written responses to circumstances as they arose in various congregations.

2. Explain the primary theological controversies that currently dominate the academic study of Paul’s letters.

3. Analyze scholarly material and weigh arguments as to whether they are persuasive, inadequate, or whether they merit further investigation. This will be demonstrated in research papers as students use or respond to scholars’ ideas.

4. Investigate a topic in one or more passages in Paul’s letters, analyze the evidence, and support the conclusions with evidence in the text of Paul’s letters.

TH507 Theology of C.S. Lewis
Dr. Gary Deddo

In this course we will survey C.S. Lewis’s primary works and two of his fictional works to see how Lewis understood the central tenets of Christian faith and their inter-relationships. We will consider how Lewis conveyed Christian faith in his context through his fiction and how we might more faithfully communicate the Christian gospel in our day. Students will:
1. Describe the major theological themes and their inter-relationships as developed by Lewis, including his understanding of the Christian life (assessed through readings and class discussion accounted for in the reading notebook online forums).

2. Analyze and critique aspects of Lewis’s thought and arguments in the light of Scripture, relevant ecumenical creeds of the church and contemporary expressions of evangelical theology with some reference to a few of his contemporary critics (assessed through readings and accounted for in reading notebook and online discussions).

3. Draw from Lewis’s thought in a way that contributes to the student's own ability to more faithfully articulate key theological themes and thereby enrich their own ministry, preaching, teaching and personal lives as members of the Body of Christ in its local and global expressions (assessed through the forums, reading notebook entries, final paper and final exam).

4. Identify, appreciate and reflect critically upon how Lewis understood and attempted to relate with theological faithfulness literary form and theological content in his writings (assessed through online forums and accounted for in the reading notebook and final exam).

**TH519 Theological Thesis**
Instructor: to be arranged, based on topic of paper and instructor availability

This course integrates learning from biblical, theological, and ministry studies into a research thesis on a theological topic. This three-unit course normally covers two semesters, and it is conducted as an independent study under the guidance of the professor as the capstone course for the Master of Theological Studies degree.

1. Student Learning Outcome 1: Establish a biblical foundation for the student’s theological beliefs.
   a. Course Objective 1: Exegete a biblical passage that is core to the issue you address.
   b. Course Objective 2: Cite biblical references for claims made regarding biblical meaning.
2. SLO 2: Ground the student’s theological beliefs in God’s interaction with humanity through Christ in the Incarnation.

   a. Course Objective 3: Provide theological development on your topic as it relates to members of the church and/or their conduct and role in the surrounding culture.

   b. Course Objective 4: Integrate research on church fathers and leaders who address issues relevant to your topic.

3. SLO 3: Demonstrate practical application of theological truths; show that a person’s beliefs about God have implications for human-to-human interactions, since humans are made in the image of God and God the Word became a human.

   a. Course Objective 5: Include a section on the application of the topic under consideration, exploring the significance of the topic.

4. SLO 4: Integrate a knowledge of Scripture and an understanding of theology, explaining the relevance of Scripture and theology to a specific topic.

   a. Course Objective 6: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the theological issue that was chosen for study.

   b. Course Objective 7: Project the opportunities and threats of the topic – the opportunities a correct understanding brings, and the threats as to why some people will reject the conclusion presented in the paper.

F. Independent study

This course allows students to study additional materials and perform additional research relevant to areas of interest, primarily in topics for which GCS does not have a specific course. *This course may carry from one to four units in Biblical Studies or Theology.* Prerequisite: at least two previous courses in the discipline, with a grade of B or better.
Students will find this course useful for the following situations:

1. The student wants to study a topic that is not currently covered in a GCS course, or to study in greater depth a topic that is covered only briefly.

2. The student wishes to graduate soon, and needs hours in a specific discipline (theology, biblical studies or ministry), but the student has already taken all the courses being offered in that discipline in a given semester.

3. The student has received transfer credit, or credit for experiential learning, but the student needs one or two units to bring the total to a multiple of three, since our program is designed for courses of three units.

4. The student expects to be too busy during the next few months to be able to handle a three-unit course, but the student is confident of handling one or two units, perhaps by dedicating a few weeks to full-time independent study.

The topic, textbooks, and instructor must be approved in advance. The course requires a minimum of 300 pages of reading for each unit of credit. See the short syllabus for more information.

G. Theology of Ministry

TM501 Theology of Ministry
Instructor: to be arranged, based on topic and instructor availability

This course integrates learning from biblical, theological, and ministry studies into a capstone paper or research thesis that expresses one’s theology of ministry. This three-unit course normally covers two semesters, and it is conducted as an independent study under the guidance of the professor as the capstone course for the Master of Pastoral Studies degree. **Prerequisite:** Student must be within six units of completing the Master’s program and must pass a summative exam.

Student Learning Outcome 1: Establish biblical foundation for personal ministry (pastoral or support ministry) that addresses the core of your ministry goals (or the societal issue you address).
1. Course Objective 1: Exegete a biblical passage that is core to your ministry or issue you address.

2. Course Objective 2: Cite biblical references for claims made regarding biblical meaning.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Explain your theological foundation for ministry by grounding it in God’s interaction with humanity through Christ in the Incarnation.

3. Course Objective 3: Provide theological development on your topic as it relates to the Church and its role in culture and conduct.

4. Course Objective 4: Integrate research on Church fathers and leaders who address issues relevant to your topic.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Integrate sound biblical exegesis and a theological foundation into your ministry topic, explaining the relevance to the specifics of your ministry.

5. Course Objective 5: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the type of ministry you have chosen to study (or theological issue as it applies to ministry).

6. Course Objective 6: Project the opportunities and threats to your ministry topic (or theological issue as it applies to your ministry).
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