The Church and Salvation

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours
TH4402 The Church and Salvation, 3 credit hours

Course Description
This course examines the doctrines of ecclesiology and soteriology. The relationship between these two doctrines is explored. Emphasis is placed on the role of the church in society and the manner in which the body of Christ functions within God's overall plan of restoration. Eschatology will also be addressed with regard to its position at the end of salvation, as well as the implications of one's eschatological views for understanding the role of the church in society.

Prerequisite: BI-2201 Interpreting Scripture

Course Objectives
By the completion of this course you should be able to:
1. Consider the relationship between biblical passages and related theological writings on the doctrines of ecclesiology and soteriology
2. Defend a position on significant and disputed areas of soteriology and ecclesiology
3. Study the church in relation to God's eschatological plan
4. Articulate a personal theology of church and salvation drawing upon Scripture, church tradition, and other doctrines
5. Grow in one’s commitment to and love for Christ and the church

Content Expectations
Required Materials:


Additional Reading:


**Video/Media**


**Assignments**

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Active participation is expected in this online course. Participation includes two main areas: discussion boards and reading. **Class Participation accounts for 25% of final course grade.**

   a. **Discussion Boards:** You must maintain a significant presence in the discussion board. Please refer to the discussion board rubric included in the Resources section of this course for more information on how your participation in the discussion board will be assessed. Unless otherwise directed, post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Friday, 11:59pm CT). Then read and respond to at least TWO of your classmates’ initial posts by the end of the week (Monday, 11:59pm CT)
b. **Course Expectations**: The completion of the course reading, audio/video reviews, online articles, etc. is an important part of the course. You are expected to complete the weekly expectations prior to your discussion boards each week so you are able to discuss the concepts with others in the course.

2. **Assignments**: There will be several projects in this course requiring skills learned that include work with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. The assignments in the course are:

   **Journal Assignments**
   You are required to record assigned reflection when instructed that will respond to a question for that particular week. Reflections will allow you to negotiate with and challenge your perception on critical issues pertinent to the course. The reflections must be at least 250-300 words in length unless otherwise noted in the journal assignments below.

   **Biblical-Historical Exploration Essay Assignments**
   There are multiple ways to approach studying any theological topic. There is a biblical-systematic route, by which one tries to arrive at an answer that satisfactorily integrates all relevant biblical passages. There is also the historical approach, which involves studying how Christians throughout the ages have thought about the topic.

   As a discipline, systematic theology seeks to combine both approaches. In these biblical-historical assignments (Essay #s 1, 2, and 3), you are asked to do the work of a theologian by taking one of your theological readings and placing it in conversation with important biblical texts. **You will do this a total of three times throughout this course.** Each assignment will use the instructions below to address topics examined in that week’s reading.

   By the end of Week 6 you will have submitted 3 essays. For each essay you will choose a weekly reading from two options:

   - **Assignment 2-1 Essay #1**: Due Week 2 – Addressing readings from Calvin in Week 1, OR Luther in Week 2
   - **Assignment 4-2 Essay #2**: Due Week 4 – Addressing readings from Wesley in Week 3, OR Barth1 in Week 4
   - **Assignment 6-1 Essay #3**: Due Week 6 – Addressing readings from Barth2 in Week 4 OR Aquinas in Week 6

   **See the details** for the Assignments 2-1, 4-2, and 6-1 below.

   **Church Visit Project, Assignment 7-1**
   Sometime over the next 6 weeks you must visit a church different from your own for the purpose of observing its practices at a service/mass. Additionally, you will EITHER informally interview its minister (or a Church leader) OR do substantial research on its theology, especially of church and salvation.

   Please begin to plan this as soon as possible. Even if your visit is early in the course, please wait until the course is wrapping up to write your paper, as you will have more learning to draw upon. **See details** for Assignment 7-1 below.

   **Constructive Theology of Church and Salvation, Assignment 8-1**
   Every reading and activity in this course is designed to work toward this culminating assignment. As you will discover in this course, there are significant theological differences on the subjects of ecclesiology and soteriology—as well as the relation between them—as held across different theological traditions. In this assignment, you are asked to thoughtfully articulate your own views on the doctrines of salvation and the church in dialogue with the course readings and materials. Your own constructive theology should be:
It is up to you to carefully decide how you will do so. In a twelve to fourteen (12-14) page double-spaced paper, outline your understanding of doctrines of salvation and church, focusing especially on the relationship between the two. In order to do this, you must include discussion of the questions outlined below. You are therefore advised to outline your paper around the following essay question and sub-questions. See detail for Assignment 8-1 below.

a. **Assignment 1-1: Journal Entry #1**
For this entry, reflect upon your church experiences and, consequently, the theology of salvation which is part of your theological “upbringing.” Consider the following prompts as you plan out your journal entry:

- What have you been taught about the doctrine of salvation?
- How have different church practices contributed to your inherited doctrine of salvation?
- How do you understand this relating to what other Christians believe on this topic? (What do you understand as points of agreement and disagreement with other Christians?)
- How do you currently think about salvation? Do your current beliefs stand in continuity or discontinuity with your “inherited theology of salvation”?

Your journal must be at least 250 words in length.

(Encounter Week 1, 50 points)

* **Assignment 2-1: Essay #1 (Assigned Week 1)**
See assignment details below.

* **Assignment 7-1: Church Visit Project (Assigned Week 1)**
See assignment details below.

* **Assignment 8-1: Constructive Theology of Church and Salvation**
(Assigned Week 1) See assignment details below.

b. **Assignment 2-1: Essay #1 (Assigned Week 1)**
For this essay, you will:
1. Select a significant theological topic (or question) that is addressed in Lessons 1 or 2 supplemental reading by either Calvin or Luther. Look for a theological topic that is significant to the author’s argument and that can be evaluated thoroughly with Scripture.

2. **THEN**, select two to three (2-3) Scripture passages that you believe are relevant to your theological theme, especially in relation to your author’s argument. These verses must relate in some way: by challenging the views of the theologian, supporting them, or expanding them. In short, you are to place an element of this author’s theology in dialogue with Scripture. A good place to begin is with Scriptures
used (or alluded to) by the authors themselves or your weekly Scripture reading assignment.

3. In a four to five (4-5) page double-spaced essay you will:
   a. Summarize what is argued in the theological text with regard to our theme (e.g., Martin Luther argues that there are two (2) kinds of righteousness—one (1) which is alien or external to a person and one (1) which is internal to a person and is based on the first kind of righteousness). About 1 page.
   b. Evaluate this theological argument in light of your two to three (2-3) selected Scripture verses along with the use of at least two (2) credible secondary resources. How, in your opinion, does Scripture (1) challenge, (2) support, or (3) augment their theological belief? You are welcome to add any other course readings to this discussion as well. About 3 to 3.5 pages.
   c. Conclude with a short summary of what you believe to be true about this topic. About 100 to 125 words.

For this assignment, be sure to include credible resources, such as recent peer-reviewed journal articles or academic commentaries. Be sure to cite all references in a Works Cited page. This page is NOT included in the page count for the paper.

(Due Week 2, 100 points)

c. Assignment 3-1: Journal Entry #2
   This journal is intended to be a “free writing” assignment. Simply use this journal entry space to reflect on the course themes and materials. Seek especially to draw connections between the course material and your life and the lives of others that you know (both inside and outside the church).

(Due Week 3, 50 points)

* Assignment 4-2: Essay #2 (Assigned in Week 3)*
   See assignment detail below.

d. Assignment 4-1: Journal Entry #3
   For this entry, reflect upon your experience of the church and your “inherited theology of the church.” Consider and journal answers to the following questions:
   - What has your experience of the church been like? How might this compare to other churches you have seen: either visiting, on TV, or from previous membership?
   - What has been the theology of the church you have been taught in these environments, especially as it relates to the question of salvation? What about in relation to eschatology?
   - Has anything in this course so far confirmed or challenged your inherited theology of the church?

(Due Week 4, 50 points)

e. Assignment 4-2: Essay #2 (Assigned in Week 3)
   For this essay, you will:
   1. Select a significant theological topic (or question) that is addressed in Weeks 3 or 4 supplemental reading by either Wesley or Barth [1] (Note: Barth 2 is assigned for
Essay #3). Look for a theological topic that is significant to the author's argument and that can be evaluated thoroughly with Scripture.

2. THEN, select 2-3 Scripture passages that you believe are relevant to your theological theme, especially in relation to your author's argument. These verses must relate in some way: by challenging the views of the theologian, supporting them, or expanding them. In sum, you are placing a specific piece of this author’s theology in dialogue with Scripture. A good place to begin is with Scriptures used (or alluded to) by the authors themselves or your weekly Scripture reading assignment.

3. In a four to five (4-5) page double-spaced essay you will:
   
   a. Summarize what is argued in the theological text with regard to your theme (e.g., Martin Luther argues that there are two kinds of righteousness—one which is alien or external to a person and one which is internal to a person and is based on the first kind of righteousness). About 1 page.

   b. Evaluate this theological argument in light of your two to three (2-3) selected Scripture verses along with the use of at least 2 credible secondary resources. How, in your opinion, does Scripture (1) challenge, (2) support, or (3) augment their theological belief? You are welcome to add any other course readings to this discussion as well. About 3 to 3.5 pages.

   c. Conclude with a short summary of what you believe to be true about this topic. About 100 to 125 words.

For this assignment, be sure to include credible resources, such as recent peer-reviewed journal articles or academic commentaries. Be sure to cite all references in a Works Cited page. This page is NOT included in the page count for the paper.

(Due Week 4, 100 points)

f. Assignment 5-1: Journal #4
We are over halfway through the course. At this point in time, detail your present thinking on the relationship between salvation and the church. Use this as a space to try out some of the ideas you want to incorporate into your final paper. By doing so here, you can get instructor feedback.

You might consider for example, how do you think Christ’s saving work should inform our understanding of what church is and should be like? How does his work relate to the concrete practices of the church (e.g., preaching, singing, baptism, the taking of the Lord’s Supper, and service, etc.)?

(Due Week 6, 50 points)

*Assignment 6-1: Essay #3 (Assigned in Week 5) *
See assignment detail below.

g. Assignment 6-1: Essay #3 (Assigned in Week 5)
For this essay, you will:
1. Select a significant theological topic (or question) that is addressed in Weeks 3 or 4 supplemental reading by either Barth 2 or Aquinas (Note: Barth 1 is assigned for Essay #2). Look for a theological topic that is significant to the author's argument and that can be evaluated thoroughly with Scripture.
2. THEN, select 2-3 Scripture passages that you believe are relevant to your theological theme, especially in relation to your author’s argument. These verses must relate in some way: by challenging the views of the theologian, supporting them, or expanding them. In sum, you are placing a specific piece of this author’s theology in dialogue with Scripture. A good place to begin is with Scriptures used (or alluded to) by the authors themselves or your weekly Scripture reading assignment.

3. In a four to five (4-5) page double-spaced essay you will:
   a. Summarize what is argued in the theological text with regard to your theme (e.g., Martin Luther argues that there are two kinds of righteousness—one which is alien or external to a person and one which is internal to a person and is based on the first kind of righteousness). About 1 page.
   b. Evaluate this theological argument in light of your two to three (2-3) selected Scripture verses along with the use of at least 2 credible secondary resources. How, in your opinion, does Scripture (1) challenge, (2) support, or (3) augment their theological belief? You are welcome to add any other course readings to this discussion as well. About 3 to 3.5 pages.
   c. Conclude with a short summary of what you believe to be true about this topic. About 100 to 125 words.

For this assignment, be sure to include academically credible resources, such as recent peer-reviewed journal articles or academic commentaries. Be sure to cite all references in a Works Cited page. This page is NOT included in the page count for the paper.

(Due Week 6, 100 points)

h. Assignment 7-1: Church Visit Project (Assigned in Week 1)

Your church visit should resemble an ethnographic case study by participant observation on the ritual practices of a worshipping community other than your own. In sum, you should not just attend the service, but keenly observe and take notes upon the practices: whether it be the way music is done, the use of technology, the style or length of preaching.

For more information on ethnography, see this video: https://youtu.be/6I1zz3DIEWQ, or read about it here: http://brianhoey.com/research/ethnography/.

You will EITHER informally interview its minister (or a Church leader) OR do substantial research on its theology, especially of church and salvation. Your interview or theological research should focus upon the theology (belief) of the community in relation to its practices.

After the service, take some time to think about the THEOLOGY behind its practices. Ask yourself questions like: Why was the sermon long or short? Why were the songs like they were? Using the information you gather from your interview/research, make connections between belief and practice. Consider especially how the church’s practices relates to its theology of salvation.

Based upon your observations and conclusions you will write a two (2) page paper describing how the church practice you observed relates to, demonstrates, or enacts the church’s theology of salvation. You are welcome to use a first person voice while presenting your experience. Please avoid editorial statements such as “I think” in place of “It is likely,” etc. Instead, use first person for describing your experience and then third person when drawing conclusions.
(Due Week 7, 100 points)

i. **Assignment 7-2: Journal Entry #5**
   Like Assignment 3-1, this journal is intended to be a “free writing” assignment. Simply use this journal entry space to reflect on the course themes and materials. Seek especially to draw connections between the course material and your life and the lives of others that you know (both inside and outside the church).

(Due Week 7, 50 points)

j. **Assignment 8-1: Constructive Theology of Church and Salvation (Assigned Week 1)**
   Every reading and activity in this course is intended to work toward this culminating assignment. As you have likely seen in this course, there are significant theological differences on the subjects of ecclesiology and soteriology—as well as the relation between them—which are held in different theological traditions and by different theologians. In this assignment, you are asked to thoughtfully articulate your own views on the doctrines of salvation and the church in dialogue with the content of this course, using course resources and materials. Your own constructive theology should be:

   - Biblically rooted (doing fresh exegesis);
   - Historically formed (listening to the Christian tradition);
   - In conversation with other doctrines (alert to systematic concerns)

It is up to you to prudently decide how you will do so. In a twelve to fourteen (12-14) page double-spaced paper, outline your understanding of the relationship between salvation and the church. You must include discussion of the topics outlined below. You are advised to outline your paper around the following essay question, and its sub-discussions.

**How would you outline your ecclesiology and soteriology and how do the doctrines mutually inform one another?**

1. How would you define ecclesiology and soteriology?
2. How do you understand these doctrines to be related?
3. Is a connection to the church necessary to salvation? How? Describe in detail.
4. How does the church function within God’s eschatological plan?
5. What concrete practices must the church do? How do each of these relate with salvation?
6. How should the church function in and in relation to society? How does this relate to your eschatology?

For this assignment, you must use the three methods of constructive theological work emphasized in this course: (1) biblical exegesis, (2) study of historic belief/tradition, and (3) dialogue between different doctrines. Therefore, in making your argument, be sure to rely on both historical and contemporary theological writings in addition to careful exegesis. You should **cite a minimum of ten theological resources** for this paper (**at least 8** from course readings and **two (2)** additional academic theological resources).

As this paper will be a major project, requiring the tools and strategies of advanced preparation gleaned from 3 or more years of undergraduate study, **please plan in advance how you will complete this paper on time.**
Writing Style
Undergraduate students at Moody Bible Institute are to follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) style for all written assignments. Your instructor may waive this requirement for specific assignments such as discussion boards, blogs, emails, and the like, but if not stated otherwise, follow MLA guidelines. Assignments not in proper MLA format may be returned with a request to redo the assignment and could be subject to a late penalty.

At a minimum, all assignments submitted as a document are to be in a standard 12-point font (limited to Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Century Schoolbook fonts), 8½ x 11 page size, and double-spaced and are to be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx). Papers that cite other works should include a Works Cited page.

Students should follow the latest version of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (currently the 7th edition) or use the OWL website at [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/).

Assessments
Your grade for this course will consist of:

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<tr>
<th>Class Participation (8 Discussions + 8 Reading Reports)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Assignments (5 Journals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2-1: Essay #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Assignment 4-2: Essay #2</td>
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<td>Assignment 6-1: Essay #3</td>
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<td>Assignment 7-1: Church Visit Project</td>
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Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

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<td>96% or higher</td>
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<td>73 - 76.9%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 95.9%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89.9%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79.9%</td>
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<td>Below 60%</td>
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Course Resources
Online students have access to the Moody Library. Go through this Checklist to determine how best to obtain books and articles on your topic: [http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/checklist](http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/checklist)
- Bookmark the library’s search start page for MBI-DL: [http://library.moody.edu/distance-learning/begin-your-search/](http://library.moody.edu/distance-learning/begin-your-search/)
- Bookmark this online guide for MBI-DL students: [http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning](http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning)
- Bookmark this tab that provides tutorials for online students: [http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/tutorials](http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/tutorials)
In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk or www.bible.org. These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the NET Bible at http://bible.org.

The final resource that deserves mention here is iTunes University. Apple has developed a platform for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures available on iTunes U. Download the iTunes University application for your device or computer to access.

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ADA Compliance Statement

Moody Bible Institute complies with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, by providing appropriate accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. We value diversity and inclusion and recognize disability as an aspect of diversity. Our shared goal is to create learning environments that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive. If you anticipate barriers related to the format, requirements, or assessment of this course, you are invited to address the professor with your concerns; additionally, you are encouraged to contact Gayla Gates, our disability services provider, at the Student Resource Center to discuss possible environmental modifications or adaptations. Please note, accommodations are not retroactive, therefore we encourage you to contact our service provider within the first two weeks of the semester. Contact Gayla Gates at ggates@moody.edu or 312-329-2177.

Course Bibliography

Suggested reading/listening/viewing on the course subject for further student and reference for the student. NOTE: The bibliography does NOT to include required textbooks or readings.


TH4402 The Church and Salvation


**Video/Media**
