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# DO 665 Seminar On Atonement

Thomas N. Buchan

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## Syllabus

**Course:** DO665 O1 (SP 2009)  
**Title:** Seminar On Atonement  
**Hours:** 3.00  
**Published:** Yes, on 01/13/2009  
**Prerequisites:**

*None*

**Department:** Doctrine  
**Faculty:** Dr. Thomas Buchan



Email: [thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu)  
 Office: FC  
 SPO:

### Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Tuesday from 2: 30p to 5: 15p in EXLEXL.

**Maximum Registration:** 20

**Catalog Description:** A survey of the development of the Christian doctrine of the atonement from the post-apostolic period to the present time. Emphasis is placed upon the central theological aspects and interpretational models of the atonement, with attention to their relevance for contemporary Christian ministry. Major primary texts and interpretive studies will be read and reflected. ST501 is a recommended preparatory course.

## Objectives:

DO 501 – Basic Christian Doctrine

## CH/DO 665 SEMINAR ON THE ATONEMENT

Asbury Theological Seminary  
Spring 2009

Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:15 pm

Dr. Thomas N. Buchan III  
Faculty Office 224  
407 – 482 – 7649

[thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu)

### I. PURPOSE

This course is designed to introduce students to the Christian doctrine of the atonement, surveying texts from the post-apostolic period to the present time. Emphasis is placed on the central theological aspects and interpretative models of the atonement, with attention to their relevance for contemporary Christian life and ministry. A selection of major primary texts and contemporary studies will be read and discussed.

### II. OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students will:

1. acquire and demonstrate a knowledge of a variety of Christian views of the atonement with special emphasis on those deemed traditional.
2. be able to locate the significance of the Christian doctrine of the atonement within the tradition of Christian thought and practice.
3. be able to interact critically with ancient, medieval, reformation, and modern approaches to and models of the atonement.
4. be able to reflect on and evaluate the significance and relevance of a variety of Christian views of the atonement for current contextual settings.
5. be prepared to coherently articulate a variety of Christian views of the atonement.

6. be prepared to coherently articulate his or her own personal convictions concerning the doctrine of the atonement.
7. be prepared for further study in the history of the doctrine of the atonement.

### III. TEXTS

Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)

ISBN: 0-8028-3308-X

*Melito of Sardis, On Pascha*, tr. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001)

ISBN: 0-88141-217-1

*Athanasius of Alexandria, On the Incarnation*, tr. A Religious of CSMV (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993)

ISBN: 0-912836-40-0 [FREE ONLINE OPTIONS AVAILABLE]

*Anselm of Canterbury, The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

ISBN: 0-19-282525-9 [FREE ONLINE OPTIONS AVAILABLE]

Peter Schmiechen, *Saving Power: Theories of the Atonement and Forms of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005)

ISBN: 0-8028-2985-6

Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004)

ISBN: 0-8010-3133-8

Mark D. Baker, ed., *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006)

ISBN: 0-8010-2742-X

There will also be a number of required readings that will be made available during the course of the term. Many of these are in public domain and available via the Internet.

### IV. REQUIREMENTS

#### A. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION – 25% (250 POINTS)

Regular, active, wakeful, and participatory attendance at class sessions is expected and required. Since this class is formatted as a seminar, your thorough preparation and willingness to participate in critical reflection on the texts under consideration is ESSENTIAL. Any questions which arise in the course of your reading and preparation should be understood as valuable raw material for the course experience. Your questions are not only strongly encouraged and sincerely invited—they are crucial to the course as a whole. Please come to class having carefully prepared in advance and with questions in mind. Your reflections on the reading assignments should be typed up and ready for electronic submission prior to our class meetings. See the Course Schedule below for details.

#### B. READING ASSIGNMENTS – 25% (250 POINTS)

Thorough and timely completion of assigned class reading is expected and required. This seminar course will not work well if you have not carefully and critically read the materials under consideration each week! In a course of this kind, your personal interaction with the reading materials is the vital basis for our ongoing conversation and inquiry as a class.

Be under no illusions: there is a **LOT** of reading in this course. **MANY** readings have been assigned because the topic of atonement in the Christian tradition is both vitally important and subject to a variety of interpretive models. It is difficult, therefore, to imagine how we could cover this topic reasonably and fairly without reading a substantial selection of texts!

However, though it is extensive, do not let the list of books and readings overwhelm you. We will be tackling this material together. This is one of the reasons why it is important for you to complete your reading assignments as conscientiously as possible and on time. In this seminar, we will be collaborating extensively, each of us shouldering a portion of the workload so that we can get through the considerable amount of material we need to in order to do the topic justice.

#### C. SEMINAR REPORTS & DISCUSSION FACILITATION – 50% (500 POINTS)

During the course of the semester, each student participant will be responsible for presenting a reading report and “anchoring” the class discussion. For your Seminar Report, you should prepare a 5-7 page double-spaced paper (1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font). Your paper will consist of a report on the reading(s) for the week in which you should briefly summarize the reading(s) and call attention to the portions of it you find most significant and worthy of our attention as a class.

In addition to your presentation of the week's material, you will also lead the discussion period of the class. To assist you in this, you might prepare a list of leading or open-ended questions that arise from your reading of the text and which can spur reflective conversation. You might also select portions of the reading which can provide the basis for careful collaborative thought in the context of the class. (Tip: If you discover in your preparations that there is something in the text that is either the source of much joy or much consternation, you may have located a potential source for further in-class collaborative reflection!)

A hard-copy of your paper will be turned in at the end of the class session, along with a hard-copy of the notes or materials you have prepared for leading the discussion. The paper, notes, and your performance as a discussion facilitator will each be graded on a 100-point scale, then combined to account for 50% of your overall course grade.

### V. GRADING

**Percentages Assigned** to each mode of assessment:

Attendance and Participation	25%
Reading Assignments	25%
Seminar Reports & Discussion Facilitation	50%

**Grading Scale** (from the ATS Catalog [pp. 30-31]):

<b>A</b>	= 95-100%	Unusually high quality, exceptional work
<b>A-</b>	= 90-94%	Far above average, fine work
<b>B+</b>	= 87-89%	Above average for graduate work
<b>B</b>	= 83-86%	Very good, average for graduate work
<b>B-</b>	= 80-82%	Slightly below average for graduate work

<b>C+</b> = 77-79%	Meets requirements, but noticeable inadequacies for graduate work
<b>C</b> = 73-76%	Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work
<b>C-</b> = 70-72%	Meets requirements, but serious gaps
<b>D+</b> = 67-69%	Minimal work
<b>D</b> = 63-66%	Barely acceptable
<b>D-</b> = 60-62%	Inadequate work
<b>F</b> = 59%-0%	Failure

**Incomplete Work** (from the ATS Catalog):

The official end of each term is 5 pm on the last day of the final exam week. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline, but not a later deadline, for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the Registrar and the faculty person involved for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. The petition must be received before 5 pm on the last day of the term.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to **an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment**. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

**What Makes a Paper Exceptional?**

An exceptional paper (A) will

- reflect a thorough and careful reading of assigned text
- manifest deep sensitivity to the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek and make significant connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in all matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** argue persuasively in student's own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate a strong awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

A good paper (B) will

- reflect a careful reading of assigned text
- manifest understanding of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek and make some connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** argue in student's own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate significant awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

An acceptable paper (C) will

- reflect a reading of assigned text
- manifest awareness of the meaning of some of the key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** present perspective in student's own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate basic awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

A marginal paper (D) will

- reflect a superficial reading of assigned text
- manifest little awareness of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- make little comment on connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus
- demonstrate inadequate awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

An unacceptable paper (F) will

- reflect a poor reading or a misreading of assigned text
- miss or manifest no awareness of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- omit any consideration of connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- fail to conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus
- demonstrate no awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

**VI. COURSE OUTLINE**

Week 1 February 10
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**AGENDA:**

- Introductions
- Review Syllabus
- What is Atonement? What Does It Mean When You Hear It? What Do You Mean When You Say It?

Week 2 February 17
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**AGENDA:**

Biblical Beginnings I:  
Jewish Sources: Aquedah, Passover, Levitical Offerings

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

TBD

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 3 February 24

**AGENDA:**

Biblical Beginnings II:  
The New Testament  
The Cross in Critical New Testament Scholarship  
The Cross in Paul's Thought and Writings

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 1-124.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 4 March 3

**AGENDA:**

Biblical Beginnings III:  
The New Testament  
The Cross in the Gospels  
The Cross in Hebrews  
The Cross in First Peter

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 125-279.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 5 March 10

**AGENDA:**

Historical Perspectives I:  
Melito of Sardis  
Tertullian  
Athanasius of Alexandria

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

*Melito of Sardis, On Pascha*, tr. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 37-67.

*Tertullian*, TBD

*Athanasius of Alexandria, On the Incarnation*, tr. A Religious of CSMV (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 25-96.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 6 March 17

**AGENDA:**

Historical Perspectives II:  
Gregory of Nyssa  
Gregory of Nazianzen  
Ephrem the Syrian  
Jacob of Serug

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Gregory of Nyssa, Selections from *The Great Catechism*

Gregory of Nazianzen, *First Oration on Easter; Second Oration on Easter*

Ephrem the Syrian, Selections from *The Homily on Our Lord*; Selections from *The Nisibene Hymns*

Jacob of Serug, Selection from TBD

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 7 March 24

**AGENDA:**

Historical Perspectives III:  
Anselm of Canterbury and Satisfaction  
Peter Abelard and Moral Example or Moral Influence

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

*Anselm of Canterbury, The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 260-356.  
Abelard, TBD

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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## READING WEEK – NO CLASS 3/31/2009

Week 8 April 7

**AGENDA:**

Historical Perspectives IV:  
Luther  
Calvin  
Wesley

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Martin Luther, TBD  
John Calvin, TBD  
John Wesley, TBD

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 9 April 14

**AGENDA:**

Contemporary Analysis of Historical Perspectives I:  
Hebrews  
Luther  
Hodge  
Irenaeus  
Athanasius

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Peter Schmiechen, *Saving Power: Theories of the Atonement and Forms of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1-193.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 10 April 21

**AGENDA:**

Contemporary Analysis of Historical Perspectives II:  
Anselm  
Schleiermacher  
Niebuhr  
1 Corinthians  
Abelard, Wesley, Moltmann

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Peter Schmiechen, *Saving Power: Theories of the Atonement and Forms of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 194-365.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 11 April 28
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**AGENDA:**

A Contemporary Reappropriation of Atonement Tradition I:  
 Divine Hospitality  
 Cruciform Hospitality

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 1-132.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 12 May 5
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**AGENDA:**

A Contemporary Reappropriation of Atonement Tradition II:  
 Cruciform Hospitality  
 Public Hospitality

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 133-263.

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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Week 13 May 13
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**AGENDA:**

Continuing to Think and Proclaim Atonement:  
 Recognition: A Variety of Models  
 Beyond Definition: Divine Mystery  
 Dialogue: Difference and Complementarity  
 Proclamation: How Do We Preach the Atonement?

**READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE:**

Mark D. Baker, ed., *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

**Seminar Reporter and Discussion Facilitator**

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## Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://one.asburyseminary.edu> and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
  - a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
  - b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
  - c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
  - d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
  - e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
  - f) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.
2. **Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

## Virtual Support Contact Information

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media** contact Information Commons:  
[Info\\_Commons@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program**, contact Dale Hale:  
[ExL\\_Office@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2393

## Accessing Information Commons Materials

### 1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm>

### 2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:  
<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

### 3. Research Questions:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

### 4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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