

COURSE SYLLABUS

ST505: The Doctrine of Salvation

Course Lecturer: Roger R. Nicole, ThD, PhD

Former Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Reformed Theological Seminary

Prepared By: Frank T. Jones, MAR

About This Course



This course was originally created through the Institute of Theological Studies in association with the Evangelical Seminary Deans' Council. There are nearly 100 evangelical seminaries of various denominations represented within the council and many continue to use the ITS courses to supplement their curriculum. The lecturers were selected primarily by the Deans' Council as highly recognized scholars in their particular fields of study.

Course Description

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” No question is more important or more debated than this one posed by the Philippian jailer. This course presents a critical and historical overview of the message, plan, and components of salvation. The lectures trace each element of the salvation process, from God’s decree to our final glorification and union with Christ. Topics such as the order of salvation, the nature of justification, and the possibility of perfection are given in-depth treatment. The course emphasizes a Reformed view of salvation, while offering fair treatment to all sides.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

- Understand and define the key terms used in the discussion of soteriology.
- Explain the Reformed perspective on this process as it relates to our predestination, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- Interact with alternative viewpoints and offer arguments which support both sides of various issues.
- Understand the study of soteriology within its historical context.

Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Course Lecturer



Roger R. Nicole, ThD, PhD (1915-2010)

Education:

- Wheaton College, DD
- Harvard University, PhD
- Gordon Divinity, STM and ThD
- Paris-Sorbonne University in Paris, France, MA
- Gordon Divinity, BD
- Gymnasie Classique in Lausanne, Switzerland, AB

Teaching Career:

- Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Reformed Theological Seminary
- Bedrock of Systematic and Christian Theology for Gordon and later Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1945-1986), where he solidified his reputation as one of the leading Christian teachers, writers, and scholars in the world
- Taught and preached at the finest institutes and universities around the world on every continent
- Fluent in Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin

Other Career Highlights:

- Founding member, International Council on Bible Inerrancy and the Evangelical Theological Society (of which he was president in 1956)
- Associate Editor, *New Geneva Study Bible*
- Corresponding Editor, *Christianity Today*
- World-class bibliophile and distinguished librarian with a personal collection including Calvin's *Commentaries on the Gospels and Acts* published during Calvin's lifetime, a copy of the first edition of Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades* published in 1552, and many other rare volumes from the 1500s and 1600s
- Ordained Baptist minister

Publications:

- Assisted in the preparation of the *New International Version* (NIV)
- Approximately 100 articles and contributor to over 50 books and reference works
- *Standing Forth, Our Sovereign Saviour*, and *The Glory of the Atonement* are included among his most influential publications.
- Two books written honoring Dr. Nicole's life and works: *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical & Practical Perspectives: Essays in Honor of Roger R. Nicole* and *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Life and Legacy of Roger Nicole*

Online Professor

If you are taking this course for credit, CUGN will assign one of its faculty members as the online professor for this course. This professor will contact you upon enrollment in the course and will guide your study. Your online professor will be available to you by email and, at set times, by chat room or other real-time technology. Your online professor will do the following in order to stimulate student involvement and facilitate effective learning:

- Evaluate and assign grades to all coursework.
- Provide assistance with technological problems that may occur.
- Answer questions that may arise.
- Issue your final grades.

Course Texts

Required:

The Lesson Assignments (see the end of this Syllabus) present reading assignments which correspond to the lecture material. By the time the course is finished, the following books will have been read:

Buchanan, James. *The Doctrine of Justification*. Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006.
(Part II only: “Exposition of the Doctrine of Justification”)

Hoekema, Anthony. *Saved by Grace*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994.

Murray, John. *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955. (Part II only: “Redemption Applied.”)

Warfield, Benjamin B. *The Plan of Salvation*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006.

Collateral Reading

The student should read a minimum of **750 pages** from the General Bibliography at the end of the Study Guide.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Academic Honesty

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student's work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar's Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Audio-based teaching**

The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in audio format. If available, we also provide the option of reading the lesson from a transcript of the audio lecture (found in the course Audio Lecture section).

- **Readings**

Reading from the required textbook(s) is assigned in this syllabus.

Mentor Relationship

Students are required to seek out a mentor with whom they can discuss the spiritual impact of the course on their life. The goal of this process is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

Spiritual Formation Project

Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection through the course's Spiritual Formation Project.

Course Requirements

1. Time: The student is required to spend a minimum of 120 hours in this course. All course requirements must be completed within 6 months of enrolling in the course.

2. **Recorded Lectures:** The student must listen carefully to all of the twenty-four (24) lectures by Dr. Roger Nicole.

3. **Reading:**

Required Texts: The student must read the required texts in their entirety as assigned in the Lesson Assignments (see the end of this Syllabus). These reading assignments should be completed before listening to each lecture.

Collateral Reading: The student must complete at least **750 pages** of reading outside of the required text. These can be selected from the Bibliography at the end of the Study Guide and can include readings done for the research paper (see below).

Reading Requirements Report: A reading statement is included at the end of this Syllabus. At the conclusion of the course the student should return the form with the final exam, indicating what portion of the reading was completed. This includes supplemental reading for the research paper. The report should indicate the title of the book, author, publisher, date of publication, and the pages read.

4. **Study Questions:** The Lesson Assignments (see the end of this Syllabus) include two to five study questions per lecture, which should be answered thoroughly and submitted in **two installments**: one prior to the midterm (lectures 1-11) and the other prior to the final exam (lectures 12-24). These questions are also located in the Study Guide.

5. **Term Paper:** The student must write a **12- to 15-page** paper, which may be submitted at any time during the course. The paper may take either of two approaches:

1. A **book report**, critiquing one of the listings from the bibliography provided in the Study Guide. You may NOT use the required reading books as your topic for the paper (i.e. Hoekema, Buchanan, Murray, and Warfield), but any of the books listed in the bibliography are acceptable. Interaction with the book should incorporate other sources as well.
2. A **topical paper**, discussing any of the major themes of this lecture series. Papers should demonstrate a working knowledge of the lecture material, required readings, and supplemental readings.

For either of these papers, a significant amount of outside reading (at least 750 pages) will be expected. To allow for this, reading assignments corresponding to the lectures become smaller during the second half of the course, permitting more attention to supplemental reading. (The Reading Requirements Report requires the student to sign affirming that this supplemental reading has been completed.)

Papers should be typed and double-spaced, and must contain appropriate bibliographical notations. The paper must follow the latest edition of K.L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Submit to the instructor or proctor and save for reference.

6. **Spiritual Formation Project**

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in

self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. With this in mind, CUGN includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. Identify your mentor early in the course, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

A. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: Reflect on the course – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

- i. Follow these steps in your reflection:
 - Step 1: What one theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
 - Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
 - Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?
 - Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what specific steps should you take to concretely apply what you have learned?
- ii. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: approximately three pages)
- iii. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

B. Community Reflection and Interaction: Interview a mentor – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- i. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is not your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- ii. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

C. Synthesis and Application: Draw your final conclusions – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- i. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- ii. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - What advice did he/she give?
 - How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
- iii. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
 - If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life. If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

7. **Examinations:** The student will take two exams, a mid-term and final, which are essay in format and cover material from the lectures and study questions. The mid-term should be taken after lectures 1-11 are completed (including the Study Guide questions), and the final should be taken after lectures 12-24. Both exams have a time limit of two hours.

Course Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Reading Requirement Report	5% of Course Grade
Study Questions	20% of Course Grade
Term Paper	20% of Course Grade
Spiritual Formation Project	15% of Course Grade
Examinations (20% each)	40% of Course Grade
Total	100%

Grades will be issued within two weeks of the end of the course.

Student Name: _____ Course: _____ Interview
Date/Time: _____

Guidelines for Mentors

(Students, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student's CUGN coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking CUGN courses are required to complete a final assignment called the "Spiritual Formation Project." This assignment involves two parts: an essay and an interview:

The ESSAY: After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

The INTERVIEW: After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

- You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)
- Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her "Personal Reflection and Evaluation" and prepare to discuss the following:
 1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
 2. Are the student's conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
 3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?
- Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).
- Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – *a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.*

NOTE: If the student's school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
Reading Requirements Report

Sign to the right of each requirement as you complete it. If any given assignment was not completed, indicate the percent read. Submit this sheet with your last assignment(s).

Buchanan, James. *The Doctrine of Justification*.
[Part II only: "Exposition of the Doctrine
of Justification"]

Hoekema, Anthony. *Saved by Grace*.

Murray, John. *Redemption: Accomplished and
Applied*. [Part II only: "Redemption
Applied"]

Warfield, B.B. *The Plan of Salvation*.

Supplemental Reading: (At least 750 pages; list readings below)

I hereby certify that I have completed the reading indicated above.

Signature

Date

Lesson Assignments

Lesson 1: Salvation and the Trinity

Synopsis: Before delving too deeply into the study of salvation (soteriology), it is necessary to define some of the key terms that are a part of the course's vocabulary. Dr. Roger Nicole approaches this group of theological terms by grouping them according to their relation to the three parts of the Trinity. Thus our understanding of the relationships between these parts becomes more clear. In this lecture, definition of key terms will establish clearly how God predestines our salvation, how Christ accomplishes our salvation, and how the Spirit applies the work of Christ to our wretched situation.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Listen to Lecture 1. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 1; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Define soteriology. How does the doctrine of salvation proper differ from soteriology in the broader sense?

1. Briefly contrast the Westminster Confession's use of "predestination" and "foreordination."
2. Why is it misleading to define God's foreknowledge as merely "advance information?" Use Romans 8:30.
3. How is Christ's substitution analogous to Adam?
4. How does the story of David and Mephibosheth reflect the work of Christ in us?

Lesson 2: Theological Terms

Synopsis: Continuing in his exposition of the major theological terms related to salvation, Dr. Nicole describes those terms which fall outside of his categories of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Included in this discussion is a brief introduction to concepts such as cleansing, calling, and grace. After completing this survey of terms, Dr. Nicole begins a series of illustrations of the concept of salvation, borrowing from Wahlstrom's *New Life in Christ*. Illustrations are grouped with respect to either individual life or social life (Dr. Nicole will take up several additional illustrations in the next lecture as well).

Preparation:

Read Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*, Chapters 1 and 2.

Listen to Lecture 2. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 2; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Describe the three steps of transformation in the life of a believer. In your description use the terms faith, repentance, conversion, mortification, and vivification.

5. Compare and contrast general and effectual calling.
6. How is union with Christ associated with and distinct from the work of the Holy Spirit?
7. Describe salvation using two illustrations from the individual sphere and two from the social sphere.

Lesson 3: The Decrees of God

Synopsis: In what way did God decree our salvation? How can this decree be explained in light of the other decrees of God? These are questions that have been addressed in various ways throughout history. In this lecture, Dr. Nicole provides a survey of different viewpoints concerning God's plan of salvation and the order of His decrees. In answering these questions, we are offered new insight on our very nature and the nature of our gracious Lord. Dr. Nicole spends the first part of this lecture offering additional illustrations of salvation in line with his discussion in the previous lecture. After this, he enters into his discussion of the plan of salvation. Differing viewpoints on the order of God's decrees are presented, based on the material of Benjamin B. Warfield's *The Plan of Salvation*.

Preparation:

Read Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Listen to Lecture 3. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 3; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

How do the Pelagian and Remonstrant views of the order of the decrees of God differ?

8. Briefly describe some of the main distinctions made among evangelicals concerning the order of the decrees of God. Define infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism.
9. Using selections from Romans, establish a foundation for the doctrine of the decrees.
10. What connotation does the verb "to know" have in Hebrew and biblical Greek?

Lesson 4: Alternatives/Objections to Decrees

Synopsis: The Calvinist position concerning the decrees of God has often been questioned or challenged due to some of the potential conclusions it makes. Is God the author of sin? What role do humans play in the process; are we free agents or programmed robots? In this lecture Dr. Dr. Nicole outlines the Calvinistic position based upon the Westminster Confession of Faith, and follows this with a fair and thorough treatment of the questions and objections it raises. This analysis will pave the way for the material of the next four lectures as well.

Preparation:

Read Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*, Chapter 5.

Listen to Lecture 4. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 4; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Describe the six characteristics that the Westminster Confession attributes to the decrees of God.

11. Refute the following misconception: “If God has decreed everything, I don’t need to make any special effort in any direction since the end is already established by the decision of God.”
12. What alternative to the reformed doctrine of the decrees has been advanced by Barth? By modern Arminians?
13. Why is the doctrine of election not in conflict with the justice of God?

Lesson 5: Objections to Decrees

Synopsis: If God has predestined some of us to eternal life and others of us to eternal darkness, what does this say about the nature of God? Those who object to Calvinism might do so on the grounds that it represents God as one who plays favorites, acts arbitrarily, or is unloving. Dr. Nicole spends this lecture refuting these common misconceptions of the Reformed view of predestination. Does God treat all people alike? Does the Bible’s talk of a universal love (John 3:16, etc.) imply a universal salvation? These and other challenges are addressed in this lecture.

Preparation:

Read J. Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapters 1 and 2.

Listen to Lecture 5. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 5; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Give a brief argument countering the claim that the doctrine of election suggests favoritism or partiality on God’s part.

14. Give a brief argument countering the claim that the doctrine of election represents God as acting arbitrarily.
15. How is election described in view of God’s love?

Lesson 6: The Sincerity of God's Offer

Synopsis: Dr. Nicole continues his assessment of the arguments against Calvinism by addressing further claims concerning God's nature. For instance, if God already knows His elect, how can His offer to the nonelect be sincere? Is God the author of sin? Dr. Nicole also delves into a discussion of fatalism, and begins his discussion of the conflict between divine activity and free will of mankind, explaining the Calvinistic view by clarifying our definition of freedom.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapters 5 and 6.

Listen to Lecture 6. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 6; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Is God's offering to the unelect sincere? Explain.

16. Cite and explain canonical and non-canonical sources that refute the idea that God is the author of sin.
17. What is fatalism?

Lesson 7: Luther vs. Erasmus

Synopsis: When we speak of human freedom, what do we mean? In this lecture Dr. Nicole continues his explanation of freedom in view of the doctrine of predestination, affirming that our sinful nature and human limitations imply a lack of freedom. Where then can freedom be found? Freedom is found in obedience to God. The implications of this point on the Luther vs. Erasmus debate are discussed to arrive at a solution to the free will vs. divine activity problem.

Dr. Nicole also uses this lecture to discuss the proper response of an elect person. Many have accused the Reformed philosophy of paving the way towards apathy, immorality, and irresponsibility, since the ends are already determined. A Biblical and historical view of this doctrine points quite to the contrary.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapter 11.

Read John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 5.

Listen to Lecture 7. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 7; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

How does one's definition of "freedom" affect their understanding of free will vs. divine activity?

18. Why might the term “irresistible grace” be misleading? Clarify this concept using examples from Scripture.
19. The doctrine of election has come under criticism for promoting a loss of morality and an attitude of apathy. Can these charges be confirmed by Reformation history? Explain.

Lesson 8: Predestination and Antinomianism

Synopsis: After a short continuation of the material of the last lecture, regarding possible undesirable human attitudes in light of the doctrine of predestination, Dr. Nicole concludes his investigation of the objections to the Reformed view of election. He begins by stressing the common ground that evangelical Calvinists and Arminians share. Next, he addresses the mysteries that are left largely unanswered by both positions. Finally, he explains the dangers that are evident in both views, warning both sides to avoid improper interpretations of their positions.

Preparation:

Read James Buchanan, *Justification*, Part II: Introduction, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

Listen to Lecture 8. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 8; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What considerations should be taken into account so that those who consider themselves elect do not become presumptuous, immoral, or apathetic?

20. What considerations should be taken into account so that those who consider themselves unelect do not become despondent?
21. What questions are left unexplained by Calvinism? By Arminianism?
22. What are six dangers of a Calvinist position? Of an Arminian position?

Lesson 9: The Order of the Decrees

Synopsis: In Lecture 3, Dr. Nicole took a brief look at differing positions concerning the order of the decrees of God; in this lecture, he goes into greater depth concerning differing positions within Reformed theology, namely the positions of infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism. After an explanation of the differences, Dr. Nicole goes on to point out the weak points of each position.

The second half of this lecture begins our look at the *ordo salutis* (or order of salvation) which will encompass the greater part of the remainder of the course. The act of justification is the start of this change in us, which leads us on to the completion of our regeneration. Dr. Nicole describes how Christ’s work accomplishes our justification, and goes on to explain the difference between “declaring just” and “making just.”

Preparation:

Read James Buchanan, *Justification*, Part II: Introduction, Chapters 10 and Chapter 11.

Listen to Lecture 9. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 9; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What problem is inherent in the infralapsarian order of the decrees? In the supralapsarian order?

23. Define “justification.” Use scriptural references in your explanation that distinguish “declaring just” from “making just.”

24. Explain the struggle Luther faced concerning his own human nature, and how an understanding of justification brought him comfort.

Lesson 10: Justification

Synopsis: Why is there a need for justification? In this lecture, Dr. Nicole addresses this question through a look at the principle of solidaric responsibility, and the effect of Adam’s sin on the lives of all mankind. After this, Dr. Nicole delves into a study of the connection of justification to various relationships. How is Christ’s act on our behalf related to faith? To good works? To heavenly rewards? To time? In addressing these issues, the lecturer also explains the concept of imputation and its relevance for Christians today.

Preparation:

Read James Buchanan, *Justification*, Part II: Introduction, Chapters 12 and Chapter 13.

Listen to Lecture 10. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 10; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Read Joshua 7. Explain how the principle of solidaric responsibility is seen in the judgment upon Achan. How does this reflect our connection with Adam and with Christ?

25. How does the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35) demonstrate the gravity of our situation? How is justification explained by this parable?

26. How is the justifying act of Christ related to the work of the Holy Spirit?

27. What is the relationship of justification to faith? Good works? Rewards?

28. In what position does Adam’s imputation place us? In what position does Christ’s imputation place us?

Lesson 11: Justification and Roman Catholicism

Synopsis: Luther's understanding of justification did not occur unprompted. A misunderstanding of the work of Christ in the Catholic church had led to the beginnings of the Reformation. As Dr. Nicole describes in this lecture, many of the doctrinal deviations of the Catholic church stemmed from a misunderstanding of the work of justification; namely, there was a confusion between "declaring just" and "making just." In this lecture, these problems are addressed, and Dr. Nicole explains how the resultant works-based Christianity led to other confusions such as the concepts of merit, prayer for the dead, purgatory, prayer to the saints and Mary, penance, and the role of the priesthood.

Preparation:

Read James Buchanan, *Justification*, Part II: Introduction, Chapters 14 and Chapter 15.

Listen to Lecture 11. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 11; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What was the conclusion of the Council of Trent concerning justification?

29. How are mortal and venial sins defined? How are they distinguished?

30. The Roman Catholic sacrament of penance creates a tendency towards at least three undesirable attitudes towards sin and/or religious duty. List and explain.

31. Explain the concept of merit. How does this view logically follow from the Catholic definition of justification?

32. Explain how the doctrines of purgatory and prayer for the dead stem from the merit concept. How can the Catholic emphasis upon the saints and Mary be explained in light of these doctrines?

Lesson 12: Adoption

Synopsis: What does it mean to be a child of God? I Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 remind us that we were bought at a price; and Galatians 4 speaks of our heirship. From where does this heir status come? Is it a signal blessing to us, or an affirmation of our created nature? In this lecture, Dr. Nicole explains the concept of adoption, relates it to our justification, and describes what this status emphasizes.

After this discussion, Dr. Nicole begins to describe the first of the three recreative blessings in the life of a Christian: regeneration. What does our regeneration accomplish? Dr. Nicole also begins in this lecture to present both sides of the argument concerning the necessity of a water baptism for salvation.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 6.

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapter 7.

Listen to Lecture 12. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 12; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Define adoption. What does this doctrine emphasize? Illustrate from Scripture.

33. What status does the blessing of regeneration give us? What does it accomplish?

34. Using at least three verses, create an argument that could be advanced for the necessity of baptism for salvation.

Lesson 13: Regeneration

Synopsis: In Lecture 12, Dr. Dr. Nicole set forth a typical argument advancing a belief in the causal connection between baptism and regeneration. In this lecture Dr. Nicole continues the discussion, addressing some of the more controversial verses on the issue. What is the role of baptism in the process of our regeneration? And what is the role of the word of God?

The connection of faith and repentance in the process of our conversion is the next topic of the class discussion. How is our conversion brought about? What responsibilities do humans have for their own conversion? What does it mean to be repentant? Dr. Nicole traces the process and clarifies these and other questions.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapters 3 and 4.

Listen to Lecture 13. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 13; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Using the same Scripture that you selected in the last question, create a refutation of the argument you advanced concerning the necessity of baptism.

35. How is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration connected to the Word of God? Explain the four phases of the regeneration process; where does the Word of God fit into this process? Illustrate using the parable of the sower.

36. How are both God and man involved in conversion?

37. Distinguish “repentance” from “remorse.”

Lesson 14: Conversion

Synopsis: If we are declared righteous at our conversion, and if we are made righteous in our heavenly glorification, what happens during the interim? In this lecture, Dr. Nicole begins his look at the lifelong

process of sanctification. This lecture takes a look at how the work of the Holy Spirit and the conscious activity of the believer work hand in hand to generate a heart that becomes increasingly in tune with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Through inspiring analogies and vivid pictures, Dr. Nicole explains the daily work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapters 8, 9, and 10.

Listen to Lecture 14. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 14; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What three major elements does faith involve? How is the recent evangelical dispute (regarding faith and the Lordship of Christ) addressed by Dr. Nicole in light of these elements?

38. Contrast the Arminian and Calvinist approaches to describing repentance and faith.

39. Describe the two elements involved in the process of sanctification.

Lesson 15: Sanctification

Synopsis: Many verses in Scripture seem at first glance to point to the possibility of the attainment of perfection in this earthly life. Commands such as “Be ye perfect” appear to some to leave that possibility within our grasp. Can perfection be attained in this life? Reminded of verses such as 1 John 1:8 (“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”), and of our own human experience, we must answer this question in the negative. How then are these confusing verses reconciled? Through a careful construction of both sides of the argument, Dr. Nicole addresses this dilemma.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 7.

Listen to Lecture 15. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 15; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Briefly outline the following arguments:

a. “A Christian attains perfection at the point of conversion.”

b. “A Christian becomes perfect through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

40. Read Matthew 5:48, Ephesians 5:25-27, and Philippians 3:15. How is each verse used to advance an argument for the attainment of perfection in this life? What is the danger of each line of approach?

41. Select and briefly explain three verses from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament that seem to support the inability to attain perfection in this life.

Lesson 16: Sanctification and Perfectionism—Part I

Synopsis: Dr. Nicole’s argument concerning the inability of perfection in this life is amplified in this lecture by a look at Paul’s decreasing assessment of himself. A look at three epistles at different stages of Paul’s life gives us a picture of his view on the subject based on his own condition. Dr. Nicole also spends a large portion of the lecture explaining the content of I John 3 and 5.

Rejecting perfection as a possibility in this earthly life, we still look forward to the heavenly accomplishment of this perfection in us. What are the means of grace by which our sanctification is brought about? Dr. Nicole spends the last part of this lecture discussing the actions we are exhorted to practice in order to mirror God’s holiness and become sanctified.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapter 12.

Review your notes from Lecture 15.

Listen to Lecture 16. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 16; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Trace Paul’s decreasing assessment of himself through his writings. How does the surrounding context of Romans 7 aid us in our interpretation of its meaning?

42. Read I John 3 and 5. Make a list of specific verses within these chapters that might be used by perfectionists to advance the possibility of perfection in this life. How are these passages explained in the non-perfectionist view of Dr. Nicole and others? (Note: Listening to the first portion of Lecture 17 may aid you in your explanation.)

43. What are the means of grace by which sanctification is achieved?

Lesson 17: Sanctification and Perfectionism—Part II

Synopsis: In this lesson, Dr. Nicole concludes his discourse on the arguments for and against the attainment of perfection in this lifetime. The biblical evidence clearly advances the latter of these two positions. What then is to be made of the verses of I John 3 & 5, which state that “no one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him” (I John 3:6)? In this final lecture on the possibility of perfection, Dr. Nicole addresses and explains these passages, ending the discussion with a series of warnings to both the perfectionist and the non-perfectionist.

Preparation:

No reading assignment.

Review your notes from Lectures 15 and 16.

Listen to Lecture 17. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 17; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

How do Leviticus 4 and Psalm 19:12 further exhibit our inability to attain perfection in this life?

44. What six tendencies of perfectionists does Dr. Nicole caution against?

45. What six tendencies of non-perfectionists does Dr. Nicole caution against?

Lesson 18: The Fruit of the Spirit

Synopsis: Scripture exhorts us to certain qualities. "...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23) Scripture also provides lists under the title, "gifts of the Spirit." What is the difference between these two? In this lecture, Dr. Dr. Nicole distinguishes between these two terms.

This is followed by a closer look at the more controversial gifts of the Spirit. Are the gifts of healing and tongues, the so-called "miraculous gifts," no longer viable in today's society? If the gift of healing is legitimate today, what is the role of physical suffering? These and other concerns are pondered and explained.

Preparation:

No reading assignment.

Listen to Lecture 18. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 18; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Contrast the fruits of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. Why are we exhorted to strive to accumulate the former and not the latter?

46. Use I Corinthians 13 to describe the argument that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have disappeared. Why is this argument difficult to maintain in light of the context of this passage?

47. Why should the benefit of the immediacy of God in the gift of tongues not be overemphasized? How does Paul address this issue?

48. Explain the origin and role of sickness and disease in the world. Explain Dr. Nicole's statement, "Some horizontal sermons are more effective than the vertical sermons."

Lesson 19: Perseverance—Part I

Synopsis: The last of Calvin’s Five Points, the perseverance of the saints, is explained in this lecture. What evidence is there for this doctrine, and what support is offered by those who espouse alternative views? Dr. Nicole presents an extensive list of both Old and New Testament evidence for the belief in such a doctrine. He then presents several of the main objections to this doctrine, paving the way for the following lecture.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 8.

Listen to Lecture 19. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 19; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What is misleading about the term “perseverance of the saints”? What alternate designation does Dr. Nicole suggest?

49. Review the syllabus outline’s list of passages supporting the doctrine of perseverance. Select ten passages that you consider to be the most compelling evidence for this doctrine, and use them to create a summary argument.
50. How has the Arminian position on the doctrine of perseverance changed from the time of Arminius to the present?
51. Life experiences seem to provide us with many examples of elect people who have not persevered. In what two ways might these cases be explained while still adhering to the doctrine of perseverance?

Lesson 20: Perseverance—Part II

Synopsis: Those who object to the doctrine of perseverance, says Dr. Nicole, do so on four main grounds. The first of these, which points to scriptural warnings regarding unfaithfulness, is discussed in Lecture 20. Paramount in this series of verses is the material of Hebrews 6 and 10, which speak of those who were “once enlightened,” who had “tasted of the heavenly gift,” and who had “shared in the Holy Spirit,” yet had fallen away. To whom do these passages refer? Does this describe faithful followers of Christ who fell by the wayside? Dr. Nicole offers an explanation of these and other difficult verses.

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapter 13.

Review your notes from Lecture 19.

Listen to Lecture 20. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 20; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Cite and explain three examples of scriptural warnings concerning faithfulness. How do these warnings raise questions regarding perseverance? How are we to interpret these Scriptures in light of this doctrine?

52. List eight characteristics we can ascertain about the subjects referred to in Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-38. In light of these observations, what can we conclude about their general state?

Lesson 21: Perseverance—Part III

Synopsis: Does the Bible describe faithful believers who failed to persevere? Dr. Nicole continues looking at this possibility, first by continuing his discussion of the first objection to perseverance (that of scriptural warnings in Hebrews and elsewhere regarding faithfulness), and next by addressing the apparent mention of Biblical characters who did not persevere. What can be said of King Saul? Of Judas Iscariot? These and others are presented in a counter-argument, leading to Dr. Nicole's rebuttal in support of perseverance.

Preparation:

No reading assignment.

Review your notes from Lecture 20.

Listen to Lecture 21. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 21; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What characteristics do the Pharisees of Matthew 12 have in common with the subjects of Hebrews 6 and 10? What allusions do the Hebrews passages make to Matthew 13? How does Judas compare with the characteristics listed in Hebrews?

53. List several examples of individuals in the Bible who seem to have failed to continue in the faith. What explanation can be offered by those who believe in perseverance?
54. List several New Testament passages that might be offered as examples of those who were blessed of God but did not persevere. Explain the difficulty of interpreting John 15:2 in light of the doctrine of perseverance.

Lesson 22: Glorification

Synopsis: Does the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints imply a denial of the reality of human freedom? Does it create the danger of viewing the doctrine as a freedom to commit sin? Opponents of perseverance would answer yes to both of these questions. Dr. Nicole cites these arguments as the final two of the four most common objections to the last of Calvin's Points and treats each in turn.

With the discussion on perseverance ended, Dr. Nicole goes on to discuss the third of the believer's recreative blessings, the crowning act of glorification. What is the nature and purpose of our glorification? Whom does it glorify? In this lecture and the next, Dr. Nicole describes the reality of our future perfection.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 10.

Review your notes from Lecture 21.

Listen to Lecture 22. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 22; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

How does the condition of heaven support a belief in perseverance?

55. Read Romans 6. What is the proper attitude of a regenerate spirit? How does the statement of Romans 6:1 reflect an unregenerate spirit?

56. What two things does glorification accomplish? Contrast the Roman Catholic and Protestant views of the achievement of perfection.

57. How is the glorification of the believer tied to the glorification of God?

Lesson 23: Union with Christ

Synopsis: The benefits of glorification extend beyond our own person. As Dr. Nicole discusses in this lecture, there are profound effects upon our own lives as well as in the created order. The discussion of glorification is concluded with a description of these two effects, as well as a refutation of the belief in a purely spiritual existence in heaven.

The last major topic of the course, that of union with Christ, is begun in this lecture as well. Dr. Nicole uses Edward Polhill's *Christus in Corde* to discuss the major unions described in Scripture, and then goes on to list the various scriptural analogies of our union with Christ, noting both their strengths and limitations.

Preparation:

Read John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapter 9.

Review your notes from Lecture 22.

Listen to Lecture 23. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 23; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

Plato stated, “The body is the prison-house of the soul.” How does the Christian view of glorification contradict this statement?

58. Describe Polhill’s three major unions as seen in Scripture.

59. How is our union with Christ similar to a building and its foundation? To a vine and its branches? To a head and its body? How is each of these analogies also dissimilar to our union with Christ?

Lesson 24: The Proper Response

Synopsis: How is our union with Christ like that of a husband and wife? How is it similar to the relation between Adam and his progeny? Dr. Nicole in this lecture analyzes both of these analogies, pointing out their points of commonality with our Christian experience, as well as the limitations of each description.

This subject concluded, Dr. Nicole ends the course by relating the doctrine of salvation to other disciplines. How do we incorporate what we have learned in this course into such fields as Christian ethics, eschatology, and the doctrine of the church? More importantly, what is the proper response to the understandings we have gained about our own experience of salvation?

Preparation:

Read Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, Chapter 4.

Review your notes from Lecture 23.

Listen to Lecture 24. You may choose to follow the course outline in the Study Guide.

Assignment: Answer the study questions provided for Lecture 24; they are listed below as well as in the Study Guide:

What aspects of our union with Christ are analogous to that of Adam and his progeny?

60. Describe several ways in which the grace of God, manifested in the individual life, is carried over to the corporate experience of the church.

61. Explain how the doctrine of salvation is related to the realms of Christian ethics and eschatology.