

Southern Baptist seminaries move to online-only classes

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NASHVILLE (BP)—Like other schools that have cancelled in-person courses to deter the spread of COVID-19, all six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries have taken action to move classes online.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have chosen to continue the remainder of the spring 2020 semester online. Gateway Seminary will not hold in-person classes from March 16-29.

In a video announcement, Southern Seminary President Al Mohler said his school's action was "driven by love of God and neighbor."

"Right now, love of neighbor means that we're going to have to interrupt the way we do theological education and college education in order to be responsive to the needs that are now presented to us by the COVID-19 challenge," he said.

Southern Seminary cancelled classes late last week and resumed instruction March 16 with online courses.

New Orleans Seminary announced March 12 it was "suspending all face-to-face classes and other large group gatherings until further notice," and was moving to online classes. The move came in response to a public health emergency declared by Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards and New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell which urges citizens to avoid large gatherings.

With North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper's declaration of a state of emergency,

Southeastern Seminary canceled all classes the week of March 16-20. When school resumes March 23, all on-campus courses and hybrid courses will move to online-only delivery for an indefinite period.

Midwestern Seminary also will be transitioning to a fully online course system for the remainder of the spring semester. All campus events have been canceled through the end of April. The school's trustee meeting, scheduled for March 30-31, will be held online.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary announced in a statement: "Effective March 23 through the remainder of the spring semester, all courses will be delivered solely through the seminary's online platforms." Southwestern Seminary also stated all chapel services for the remainder of the semester have been canceled.

Gateway Seminary announced it was canceling in-person classes through March 29 and would "announce a plan for the rest of the semester based on circumstances as they develop." From March 16-29, Gateway's in-person classes would instead be delivered either online or not held at all, the statement said.