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**FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING****TF 1023****FALL 2009**

**T/TH, 8:30 am – 9:50 am**  
**Schlegel Hall, 123**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Faith Seeking Understanding (FQI) is a team-taught, interdisciplinary course in theology and ethics that is usually taken in the fall semester of the first year. FQI is designed to follow the summer course for entering students, Transforming Seminary Education (TSE), and to anticipate the two-semester course History of Christian Experience (HCE1 and HCE2). The purpose of FQI is to help students gain greater confidence and competence in thinking theologically and ethically. The course intends to prepare students for this task by providing an introduction to systematic theology and ethical method. Students will reflect on the interplay between belief and behavior, as they wrestle with traditional doctrines and contemporary issues in theology and ethics. They will gain skill in reading theological texts and thinking doctrinally. FQI is organized around the Nicene Creed, a fourth-century creed that is used ecumenically by the vast majority of Christians throughout the world.

On 10/6, 10/22, 11/19, and 12/8, the class will divide in three sections for small group discussion. On those days, please come prepared to discuss the reading and the question listed in the syllabus for that date.

**Requirements:**

1. Attendance and informed participation, including four 2-page reflection papers (40%)  
Students will prepare a brief paper (about 500 words) based on the assigned question. Papers will be due during the class period on the day assigned. You should strive to write as a learning theologian, both open to instruction from others in the Christian conversation and eager to enter into that conversation yourself.

In these papers, students should demonstrate both a clear understanding of the assigned readings and a critical theological engagement with the arguments and themes expressed. Roughly half the paper should be an exposition of the major ideas of the reading(s), with the other half devoted to your theological and ethical response. This can be done either in an exposition-response sequence, or by more of a dialogue with the readings throughout the paper. Please adhere to the 2-page requirement.

2. Take-Home Midterm: (30%)

In this exam you will draw together the themes of the course to this point. You will answer three questions, writing about three pages, double-spaced, per question, for a total of 8-10 pages. Questions will be distributed October 22. Exams are due on November 3. You are free to discuss these questions

with your classmates, but your writing for the exam must be your own. You may use your books and notes in preparing for and writing the exam; any quotations or paraphrases from written materials must be properly referenced.

### 3. Final In-Class Examination (30%)

In this exam you will draw together the themes of the course. Study questions will be distributed on December 8.

**We highly recommend that students take advantage of the services of the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Schlegel Hall, in preparing their written assignments for this course.**

### Required Texts:

1. Amy Plantinga Pauw and Serene Jones, eds., *Feminist and Womanist Essays in Reformed Dogmatics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), referred to in the syllabus as **FWE**, followed by the chapter number
2. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds., *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), referred to in the syllabus as **CT**, followed by the chapter number

### Library Reserves (please make your own copy of the assigned pages):

James H. Burtness, *Consequences: Morality, Ethics, and the Future* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999)  
Delores Williams, "Black Women's Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption," in Paula Cooley, William Eakin, and Jay McDaniel, eds., *After Patriarchy* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 1-14.  
Margaret Farley, *A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (NY: Continuum, 2006)  
Sung Wook Chung, "Christianity and Buddhism: Significant Points of Contact and their Missional Implications, in Chung, ed., *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), ch. 11, pp. 223-240  
Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That all Men be Saved"? with a Short Discourse on Hell*, trans. David Kipp and Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988)  
Larry L. Rasmussen *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996)

### E-Reserve Readings:

9/24 2006 PC(USA) paper: *The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing*,  
<http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/issues/trinityfinal.pdf> Read lines 52-526

10/1 Russell A. Butkus, "The Stewardship of Creation,"  
Teresa Morgan, "Becoming Better Gardeners"  
<http://www.baylor.edu/christianethics/index.php?id=15932> Scroll down to "Moral Landscape of Creation"

10/6 Charles Campbell, *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002)

10/22 William C. Placher, *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005)

11/24 1991 World Council of Churches Address: Chung Hyun Kyung, “Welcome the Spirit; hear her Cries”

<http://www.cta-usa.org/foundationdocs/foundhyunkyung.html>

## **LPTS Classroom Policies:**

### **Inclusive Language:**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible’s images for God. See for further assistance,

[http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

### **Academic Honesty:**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another’s language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **Special Accommodations:**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Citation Policy:**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **Attendance Policy:**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify one of the instructors of their absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Repeated absences may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

## The Nicene Creed

[Translation taken from *The Book of Confessions*, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 2004), p. 3]

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**Schedule of classes and assignments**  
**T/TH, 8:30 am – 9:50 am**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Subject/Assignment</u></b>
TH (9/10)	Introduction (P, H, W) Orientation to the course
T (9/15)	Theological Reflection (P) <b>FWE Introduction</b> <b>CT 1</b>
TH (9/17)	Ethical Reflection (W) James H. Burtness, <i>Consequences: Morality, Ethics, and the Future</i> , “Foreword,” pp.1-15 (Library reserve)
T (9/22)	“We believe . . .” (H) Knowing God ( <b>Doctrine of Revelation</b> ) <b>CT 4</b>
TH (9/24)	“ . . . in one God, the Father, the Almighty ” (P) Trinity and Language for God ( <b>Doctrine of the Trinity</b> ) “The Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing” (E-Reserve) <b>FWE 4, pp. 63-67</b> <b>FWE 7</b>
T (9/29)	“maker of heaven and earth, of all this is, seen and unseen” (H) ( <b>Doctrine of Creation</b> ) <b>FWE 2</b> <b>CT 5</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Reflection Paper:</b> What do Christians mean when they say that God is Trinity?
TH (10/1)	“maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen” (W) ( <b>Creation Ethics</b> ) Russell A. Butkus, “The Stewardship of Creation” (E-Reserve) Teresa Morgan, “Becoming Better Gardeners” (E-Reserve)
T (10/6)	Discussion: Powers and Principalities Charles Campbell, <i>The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching</i> , pp. 11- 23 (E-Reserve) Discussion question: What are powers and principalities, and why should they be considered “part of God’s <i>good</i> creation” (Campbell, p. 22)?

TH (10/8) “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. . . . he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. (P)

Jesus Christ, Incarnation (**Christology**)

**CT 8**

**FWE 4**

T (10/13) “For us and for our salvation” (H)

Sin and Grace (**Hamartiology and Doctrine of Grace**)

**CT 6, 7**

TH (10/15) “For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.” (P)

Cross and Suffering (**Doctrine of Atonement**)

**FWE 5, 8**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reflection Paper:** What is the relationship between sin and grace?

T (10/20) “For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.” (W)

Ethics of Suffering

Delores Williams, “Black Women’s Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption,” in Paula Cooley, William Eakin, and Jay McDaniel, eds., *After Patriarchy*, pp. 1-14 (Library reserve)

**FWE 8, pp. 125-134**

TH (10/22) Discussion: The Cross and Criminal Justice

William C. Placher, “Visiting Prisoners,” in *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith*, pp. 150-156 (E-Reserve)

Discussion question: How should belief in the power of Christ’s cross affect the way we see human sin and punishment?

**MIDTERM TAKEHOME QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED**

10/26-10/30 Research and Study Week

T (11/3) “On the third day he rose again. . . .” (W)

Resurrection and Salvation (**Soteriology**)

**FWE 8, pp. 134-138**

**FWE 9**

**MIDTERM TAKEHOMES DUE**

TH (11/5) “For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again *in accordance with the Scriptures*” (H)

Word of God (**Doctrine of Scripture**)

**CT 2**

**FWE 3**

T (11/10) “was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human.” (W)

TH (11/12) “he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.” (H)

Kingdom of God and Eschatology

**CT 12**

**FWE 14**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reflection Paper:** Isn't love enough? Why is justice an essential consideration for a Christian sexual ethic?

T (11/17) “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.” (P)

Holy Spirit (**Pneumatology**)

**CT 11**

TH (11/19) Discussion: Heaven and Hell

Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope “That all Men be Saved”? with a Short Discourse on Hell*, pp. 225-54. (Library Reserve)

Discussion Question: What are the five possible responses to the biblical two-fold outcome of God's judgment?

T (11/24) “He [The Holy Spirit] has spoken through the Prophets.” (P)

Christianity and World Religions (**Inter-Religious Dialogue**)

**CT 13**

**Chung Hyun Kyung, WCC Address (E-Reserve)**

**Sung Wook Chung**, “Christianity and Buddhism: Significant Points of Contact and their Missional Implications,” in *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ*, pp. 223-240 (Library reserve)

11/26-27 Thanksgiving Break

T (12/1) “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.” (H)

Church and Communion (**Ecclesiology and Sacraments**)

**CT 9, 10**

**FWE 12**

**4<sup>th</sup> Reflection Paper:** Is it true that “Christ alone can save sinners, and the salvation in Christ alone is the true and genuine salvation”? (Sung Wook Chung, p. 227) What does this mean for non-Christians?

TH (12/3) “We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.” (W)  
Eschatology and Ethics  
Larry L. Rasmussen *Earth Community Earth Ethics*, Preface (pp. xi-xiv) and Part 3, (pp. 322-354) (Library reserve)

T (12/8) Discussion: The Christian Life

**FWE 10**

Discussion Question: What does it mean to be “always reforming and always resisting” in today's society?

FINAL EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED

TH (12/10) “Amen.” Final Words (PHW)