

Contemporary Theologies

Wednesdays 1:30-4:20

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Schlegel 200

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Course Overview:

This course introduces students to three influential conversations happening in contemporary Christian theology, as well as a variety of constructive approaches to theology. These conversations explore the history and traditions of Christianity in relation to empire, to the emerging theses of multiplicity and polydoxy within religiously plural communities, and to racism.

Objectives:

This course addresses the following SLOs of the M.Div. program:

SLO3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary.

SLO6: Students will demonstrate an ability to recognize systemic racism, corporate and individual, and their own participation in it.

SLO7: Students will give evidence that they are conscious of multiple forms of oppression and injustice, including sexism, patriarchy, classism, heterosexism and poverty and able to identify strategies for responding to them.

SLO15: Students will be able to talk intelligently and articulately about what they believe to others.

SLO16: Students will be able to reason, write, and speak clearly.

Assignments within the course are designed to assess these outcomes, as indicated in parenthetical notations below.

Requirements:

1. Read assigned texts closely. These texts are chosen for their representation of multiple contemporary theological views and methods (SLO3) and for their engagement with multiple forms of oppression (SLO7), including racism (SLO6).
2. Actively participate in class discussions and activities (SLO15).
3. Present one of the readings, providing a hard-copy two-page summary of the text and three open-ended questions for the class to consider and discuss (SLO3).
4. Write two 7-8 page essays, engaging one of the readings and presenting a constructive theological argument (SLO16). This includes writing drafts and participating in class editing activities.
5. Complete a collaborative, oral final examination. This entails engaging in a small group discussion with the professor to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and competence in theological conversation (SLO15, SLO16). Students will have 24 hours after their final examination to submit a brief addendum to their oral remarks.

Readings:

Keller, Catherine and Laurel Schneider, editors. *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relationality*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Pui-lan, Kwok, Don Compier, and Joerg Rieger, editors. *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Jennings, Willie. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Late Policy:

Papers are due in the professor's office by 5PM on the due date. Papers will be docked one-third of a grade if they are turned in late for each additional 24 hours afterward. For example, a paper turned in an hour late would be reduced from an A to an A-, while a paper turned in 25 hours late would be reduced from an A to a B+. Papers turned in 72 hours after the due date will not be accepted.

Grading:

Class participation 15%, first paper 20%, seminary presentation 20%, second paper 20%, final examination 25%.

Calendar:

2/11 Introduction

2/18 Pui-lan, 1-45.

2/25 Pui-lan, 123-138, 153-184. Discussion of constructive theological writing.

3/4 Pui-lan, 337-352, 439-470. Also due: thesis for first paper.

3/9 First paper due.

3/11 Keller, 1-16, 19-35.

3/25 Keller, 81-125.

4/1 Keller, 167-202.

4/8 Keller, 217-257. Also due: draft of second paper. Classroom editing.

4/13 Second paper due.

4/15 Jennings, 1-64.

4/22 Jennings, 65-116.

4/29 Jennings, 207-294.

5/6 Concluding conversation, exam prep.

Final examinations to be scheduled.

Use of 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. For more information see: <http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885> 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.

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. Two occurrences of

plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

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) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) 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 Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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 the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.