

Faculty:
Shannon Craigo-Snell
scraigo-snell@lpts.edu; ext. 438
Office: Schlegel 200
Amy Plantinga Pauw
amypauw@lpts.edu; ext. 425
Office: Gardencourt 215

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY AND ETHICS (ITE)

TF 102-3
FALL 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 – 11:20 AM
Schlegel Hall 122
(On discussion days: Schlegel 122 and 123)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Theology and Ethics (ITE) is a team-taught, interdisciplinary course in theology and ethics that is usually taken in the fall semester of the first year. ITE is designed to anticipate further courses in Area B (History, Theology, and Ethics).

The purpose of ITE is to help students gain greater confidence and competence in thinking and writing about theology and ethics. The course prepares 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. Furthermore, the course encourages students to think self-critically about their own ethical and theological commitments.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Students from a variety of programs enroll in this course. The work of the course has been designed to contribute to the following program-specific Student Learning Outcomes:

MDIV

SLO 3: Students will be able to think theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs.

SLO 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect critically and self-critically on relationships between Christian faith and various forms of systemic injustice.

QEP-SLO 2: Students can articulate own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.

MAR

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

SLO4: Students will demonstrate the ability to think theologically, strategically, imaginatively, and contextually about ethical issues

MAMFT

SLO 3: Graduating students will be able to think ethically and make appropriate clinical ethical decisions.

SLO 5: Graduating students will be able to use a theologically informed and clinically appropriate framework to integrate religious and spiritual factors in to the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.

To contribute to these Outcomes, students will:

1. Read and analyze academic texts in theology and ethics.

Thus, the course will rely on primary texts that serve as examples of theology and ethics done well.

2. Write papers that interpret academic texts, explain and compare positions, and construct their own theological and ethical arguments.

Thus, the course will include instruction on writing in a seminary setting, as well as assignments that require demonstration of these skills.

3. Internalize critical thinking skills and practice them in the presence of others and in conversation with texts.

Thus, the course will introduce conceptual frameworks for theology and ethics, both doctrinal and methodological.

4. Discuss and evaluate criteria for doing theology and ethics well.

Thus, the course will explore what it means to be accountable to a community—past, present, and future—in the work of theology and ethics.

5. Collaborate in order to advance a theological or ethical position through dialogue.

Thus, the course will both model and instruct students in the use of a diversity of views as a resource to improve the adequacy and comprehension of one's own

position. Time will be provided for class discussion, both plenary and in small groups, throughout the semester.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance and informed participation, including in discussion sections (15%)
2. Four papers (0%, 20%, 20%, 20%)

The first writing assignment of the course will be a 500-word paper. The prompt for this paper is on the last page of the syllabus. This paper will not be graded but will receive comments to improve writing. It is due at midnight on 09/20.

Students will prepare three brief papers (3-4 pages) responding to the prompts on the last page of the syllabus. These papers are due at midnight on 10/5, 10/29, and 11/25.

All papers are to be submitted to both instructors electronically by midnight of the day they are due. Send papers to: amypauw@lpts.edu and sraigo-snell@lpts.edu

Papers will be written following the conventions of academic writing.

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

In unusual circumstances, requests for extensions may be made at least 24 hours in advance. Late papers submitted without an extension will be penalized by loss of up to a grade (e.g. from B+ to B) for each day they are late.

3. Oral final examination in groups: claiming the wisdom and role of theologian (25%)
Questions will concentrate on articulation of the student's emerging theological and ethical understandings, in awareness of and conversation with diverse positions.
Preparatory questions will be distributed in advance. Times for the meetings will be arranged for the final week of the semester.

TEXTS REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

1. Farley, Margaret. *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2006. ISBN: 9780826429247.
2. Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, tr. Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987. ISBN: 0883445522.
3. Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*, reprint edition. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996. ISBN: 0807010294.

LIBRARY RESERVES:

“Companion volumes” (Each student will choose one of these for most of the “companion” assignments. Students should buy a copy of the companion they choose.)

1. Evans, James H. Jr. *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780800690782.
2. Rigby, Cynthia L. *Holding Faith: A Practical Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2018. ISBN: 9781426758140.
3. Williams, Rowan. *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. ISBN 9780664232139.

Other resources are available, as indicated, on CAMS or on the Web; other readings may be added during the course.

Please have available your own copy of these readings on the day they are discussed in class.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS:

Many of us are becoming increasingly addicted to our electronics such that we are unable to focus on other (more important) matters for a period of time. Thus, we ask that we create a time and space to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be silenced and/or turned off and put away. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask us for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session.

LPTS CLASSROOM POLICIES:

As with all LPTS classes, this course will honor these Seminary policies:

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 Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is 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.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two days of class (or, even better, before the class begins) and should speak with the instructors 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 instructors.

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 instructors 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.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Subject/Assignment</u> |
|--------------------|---|
| TH S 6 | Introductions (APP, SCS) What is this course? What is the work of the theologian? This session will include an introduction to the three “companion volumes” (Evans, Rigby, Williams). |
| T S 11 | God (APP, SCS) Read: Choose one of these “companions” and read the designated pages: Evans: pp. vii, xxi-xxii, Introduction, chs. 1-3; recommended: 194-200 Rigby: pp. xvii-xxv, chs. 1-2 Williams: pp. vii-xiii; 3-20, 122-126 |

- TH S 13** **God** (APP, SCS)
Read: Read the sections on God in another of the companions (see pages above). Attentive to the distinctiveness of these theological introductions, choose by the next class which will be your “companion” through the course.
CAMS reading:
Kate Bowler, “What to Say When You Meet the Angel of Death at a Party”
(*The New York Times*, 01/29/2018)
- T S 18** **Creation** (Discussion groups)
Read: Designated sections on creation in your companion:
Evans: pp. 82-8 (71-76)
Rigby: ch. 5
Williams: ch. 2
- TH S 20** **Creation** (APP)
Read: CAMS reading
Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics*, pp. 227-244
1st paper is due at midnight.
- T S 25** **Christology: Who does the church say Jesus is? (SCS)**
Read: Thurman, 1-35 & companion:
Evans: ch. 4
Rigby: ch. 3
Williams: chs. 3 and 4
- TH S 27** **Christology: Who does Thurman say Jesus is? (APP)**
Read: Thurman, 36-88 & companion:
Evans: continue with ch. 4; Foreword by Stephen G. Ray, Jr.
Rigby: continue with ch. 3
Williams: finish chs. 3 & 4
- T O 2** **Christology: Who does Jesus say I ought to be? (SCS)**
Read: Thurman, 89-112 & companion:
Evans: finish ch. 4
Rigby: ch. 8
Williams: pp. 20-28

TH O 4 Theological Anthropology: Who are we? (Discussion groups)
Read: Farley, xi-108 and companion:
Evans: review ch. 2
Rigby: ch. 6
Williams: pp. 49-55

F O 5 2nd paper is due at midnight.

T O 9 Theological Anthropology: Who are we together? (APP)
Read: Farley, 109-206 and companion:
Evans: pp. 183-88 (this essay is not in the earlier edition)
Rigby: ch. 10
Williams: pp. 100-102

TH O 11 Theological Anthropology and Ethics (SCS)
Read: Farley, 207-311 and companion:
Evans: ch. 5
Rigby: continue with ch. 10
Williams: pp. 128-133

OCTOBER 15-19: RESEARCH AND STUDY WEEK

T O 23 Sin and Suffering (APP)
Read: Gutiérrez, xi-50 and companion:
Evans: finish ch. 5
Rigby: review pp. 164-167 and ch. 6
Williams: pp. 42-55

TH O 25 Sin and Suffering: Where Is God? (SCS)
Read: Gutiérrez, 53-104 and companion:
Evans: return to ch. 3
Rigby: review ch. 6
Williams: pp. 38-46

M O 29 Third paper is due at midnight.

T O 30 “What language shall we borrow?” Speaking faithfully about God
(Discussion groups)
Read: CAMS readings

Lynn Japinga, "Language about God," in *Feminism and Christianity: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), pp. 55-72.
Ruth C. Duck and Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Praising God: The Trinity in Christian Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), pp. 25-45.

- TH N 1 The Holy Spirit & the Church (APP)**
Read: CAMS and online readings
K. M. George, "Bearing Witness to Christ and to Each Other in the Power of the Holy Spirit," <http://www.globalchristianforum.org/Default.aspx?PageID=7780894&A=SearchResult&SearchID=25358200&ObjectID=7780894&ObjectType=1>
John Howard Yoder, "The Otherness of the Church," in Bryan P. Stone, ed. *A Reader in Ecclesiology* (Ashgate, 2012), pp. 199-204
Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Orbis, 2008), pp. 126-128; 131-133.
- T N 6 The Holy Spirit and the Church (Discussion groups)**
Read: Evans: ch. 6
Rigby: ch.7
Williams: ch. 5
- TH N 8 Community and Trinity (SCS)**
Read: Evans: continue with ch. 6
Rigby: ch. 4
Williams: pp. 135-140
- T N 13 Community and communities: Christians & Others in Dialogue (SCS)**
Read: CAMS & online readings
"A Common Word Between Us and You," pp. 1-36
<http://www.acommonword.com/the-acw-document/>
And companion:
Evans, review ch. 3
For those reading Rigby: William Placher, *Unapologetic Theology*, pp. 15-17 (CAMS)
Williams, "A Common Word for the Common Good" (CAMS)

- TH N 15** **The Authority of Scripture for Theology (APP)**
Read: M. Brown, "Hearing the Master's Voice"; Fretheim, "The Authority of the Bible and the Imaging of God"; Jones, "Inhabiting Scripture"; and Lancaster, "Authority and Narrative," in William Brown, ed. *Engaging Biblical Authority* (Louisville: WJK, 2007)
- T N 20** **No Class. 4th paper is due at midnight on Sunday, November 25.**
- TH N 22** **THANKSGIVING RECESS**
- T N 27** **Last things: Eschatology (APP)**
Read: Companion:
 Evans: ch. 7
 Rigby: ch. 9
 Williams: ch. 6
- TH N 29** **Issues in eschatology (SCS)**
Read: CAMS readings:
 Joan M. Martin, "A Sacred Hope and Social Goal: Womanist Eschatology," in Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones, eds., *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), pp. 209-226.
 Jürgen Moltmann, "Liberating and Anticipating the Future," in Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones, eds., *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), pp.189-208.
- T D 4** **Eschatology (Discussion groups)**
- TH D 6** **Ask a theologian and concluding matters (APP, SCS)**

Times for the oral Final Examination will be arranged for the final week of the semester.

Paper Prompts

Paper 1, due 9/20

Write a 500-word essay on “What to Say When You Meet the Angel of Death at a Party” by Kate Bowler (*New York Times*, 1/29/2018) (CAMS)

Write a 5-paragraph paper that reflects on different ways that Christians understand God and God’s providence. Write one paragraph on what Christian “minimizers” would say about God and God’s providence. Write one paragraph on what Christian “teachers” would say. Write one paragraph on what Christian “solvers” would say. Write one paragraph on what Kate Bowler herself says. Finally, write one paragraph on what you say about God’s providence.

Paper 2, due 10/5

Using the conventions of academic writing, write a paper 3-4 pages (double-spaced) in length.

How does the Christology of your companion text compare and/or contrast with that of Howard Thurman, and how does considering the two authors together change your own thinking about Jesus?

It will be useful, when summarizing the positions of the two theologians, to refer back to their texts.

Paper 3, due 10/29

Using the conventions of academic writing, write a paper 3-4 pages (double-spaced) in length.

Choose a point of comparison and/or contrast between Gutiérrez and your companion on the relationship between sin and suffering, and give your own ethical and theological response.

Paper 4, due 11/20

Using the conventions of academic writing, write a paper 3-4 pages (double-spaced) in length.

Pick two of the essays assigned from the book *Engaging Biblical Authority*, and use them as your dialogue partners in answering the question, “How do you understand the authority of the Bible?” If you are taking Scripture I this semester, also think about how your study of the Bible in that class has affected your understanding of its authority.