

Faculty:
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Systematic Theology
Tues and Thurs 10:00-11:20
Nelson Hall 122
Fall 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Systematic Theology is an introduction to doctrinal thinking in traditional and contemporary theology. It is a foundational course that prepares students for further work, particularly in the framework of Wisdom and Witness.

This course is intended to help students move with agility between the varied faith claims of Christian communities and the demanding needs of our current contexts. Students will learn to identify theological doctrines as they are invoked, manipulated, or relied upon in contemporary life. They will learn how to use doctrine to critique current issues and look for solutions, as well as how to use current issues to critique doctrinal claims. Furthermore, the course encourages students to think self-critically about their own 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.

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 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.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance and informed participation, including in discussion sections
2. Quizzes
3. “Credo” statement, no more than 10 sentences
4. Visual image engaging doctrine with explanatory paragraph
5. 180 second piece engaging doctrine
6. One page compare and contrast of two Christological hymns, selected and included
7. Letter to the editor responding to newspaper article engaging doctrine
8. Reflection on challenge to “credo”
9. Group oral exam

All assignments are to be submitted to the instructor electronically by slid under the office door (Schlegel 200) by midnight of the due date, except for the 180 seconds assignments which will be presented in class on the due dates.

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 assignments without extension will not be accepted.

TEXTS REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

1. McGrath, Alister E., *Theology: The Basics*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. ISBN:978-1-4051-6754-3.
2. Farley, Margaret. *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2006. ISBN: 9780826429247.
3. Cone, James H. *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1972. ISBN: 978-0-88344-843-4.
4. Pauw, Amy Plantinga. *Church in Ordinary Time: A Wisdom Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017. 978-0-8028-7186-2.
5. Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*, reprint edition. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996. ISBN: 0807010294.

LIBRARY RESERVES and CAMS

1. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “A coming home to myself: the childless woman in the West African space.” In *Liberating Eschatology*.
2. Delores Williams, “God-Talk and Black Liberation Theology.” In *Sisters in the Wilderness*.

Other resources are available, as indicated, in the library, 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:

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 (Beth Herrinton-Hodge, 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

Date

Subject/Assignment

1. Sept. 5; Introduction
2. Sept. 10; Faith, God, and Creation: McGrath, Preface-Ch. 3, Vii-60. **Credo due**
3. Sept. 12; Jesus and Salvation: McGrath, Ch. 4-5, 61-101. Also: Williams on CAMS.
4. Sept. 17; Trinity: McGrath, Ch. 6, 102-123.
5. Sept. 19; Church and Sacraments: McGrath, Ch.7-8, 123-164.
6. Sept. 24; Eschatology: McGrath, Ch.9-Moving On, 165-187. Also: Oduyoye on CAMS
7. Sept. 26; Discussion, **Visual image due**
8. Oct. 1; Sources and Norms: Cone, Preface-Ch.2, ix-31.
9. Oct. 3; Black Theology: Cone, Ch. 3-4, 31-77.
10. Oct. 8; Black Theology: Cone, Ch. 5-Concluding Reflection, 79-130.
11. Oct. 10; Discussion, Presentations of **180 second** assignments
Oct. 15 No class, Research and Study (Read Farley)
Oct. 17 No class, Research and Study
12. Oct. 22; Discussion, Presentations of **180 second** assignments
13. Oct. 24; Theological Anthropology: Farley, Preface-Ch. 3, xi-108.
14. Oct. 29; Theological Anthropology: Farley, Ch. 4-5, 109-206.
15. Oct. 31; Theological Anthropology: Farley, Ch. 6-7, 207-312.
16. Nov. 5; Discussion, **Letter to the editor due**
17. Nov. 7; Christology: Thurman, Foreword- Ch. 2, 1-57.
18. Nov. 12; Christology: Thurman, Ch. 3-Epilogue, 59-112.
19. Nov. 14; Discussion, **Hymns assignment due**
20. Nov. 19; Ecclesiology: Pauw, Introduction-Part 1, 1-54.
Nov. 25 No class, AAR
Nov. 28 No class, Thanksgiving
21. Nov. 21; Ecclesiology: Pauw, Part 2, 55-107
22. Dec. 3; Ecclesiology: Pauw, 1Part 3, 08-164
23. Dec. 5; Discussion, **Challenge to Credo due**

Assignments:

1. Write your own personal creed (“Credo”), including one sentence on between 8 and 10 doctrines. Be as specific and strong as possible.
2. Create a visual image (using photography, drawing, collage, etc.) that depicts (in concrete, abstract, or evocative ways) your understanding of eschatology. All images must be original. Provide one paragraph explaining what this image means to you.
3. You have 180 seconds to present your work of second order theology regarding the sources and norms of theology in the community to which you hold yourself accountable. Be creative.
4. First, read a bunch of letters to the editor to get a sense of the style and format. (Check out those by LPTS alum Bill Holmes in the Louisville Courier-Journal.) Second, read a bunch of newspapers until you find an article that you understand to contain problematic theology. Third, write a letter to the editor in which you explain how this is theological, why it is theologically problematic, and what you suggest as remedy or aid. No more than 200 words.
5. Identify two hymns from your tradition that convey Christological content. In one page, briefly explain the Christology of each hymn, note which you prefer and why.
6. Look back to your Credo from the beginning of the semester. In no more than a page, identify a part of your Credo that has been challenged since coming to seminary, if you would change it, and, if so, how.
7. The final examination will be in a group oral format. This is an exercise in collaborative theology. The class will be divided into small groups. Each group will be assigned a 45-minute time slot during the days for final exams. All students will be given a list of study questions. During a group’s session, the students and professor will begin with those questions and discuss the work of the semester.