

T 1025: Introduction to Systematic Theology

Working Syllabus
Episcopal Divinity School, Spring Term 2014
Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. ET
Sherrill 250

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the sources, methods, and major doctrines of Christian theology. Topics to be covered include revelation, the persons and functions of the Trinity, sin and grace, the church and sacraments, missiology, and last things. Particular attention will be paid to the historical development as well as the contemporary reconstructions of such doctrines.

Specific Learning Goals

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the sources, methods, and major doctrines of Christian theology.
- Understand the historical development and contemporary reconstruction of theological doctrines.
- Articulate a systematic theology that draws upon one's context and social location.
- Develop creative ways to teach and discuss Christian theology in ministry settings.
- Prepare, if applicable, for the Christian theology section of the General Ordination Examination and/or other denominational examinations.
- This course will honor multicultural worldviews, respect the contributions of multiple voices, and be taught with a commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Course Requirements

This course will have both lecture and discussion components. All students are expected to come prepared to participate actively in class discussions and in weekly online postings. Please note that this syllabus is a work-in-progress, and the content of the course may change during the term. Any student who requires reasonable accommodation with respect to the course requirements as a result of disability must notify the instructor and academic dean, and also provide written documentation of such disability. Specific requirements for full course credit include:

- 30% Attendance and active participation in class;
- 30% Weekly online posts on SurveyMonkey no later than 11:59 p.m. of the night (Tuesday)

- before each class meeting;
- 15% Short paper, due via email to pcheng@eds.edu prior to class on March 19; and
- 25% Take-home, self-timed, three-hour final exam, due via email to pcheng@eds.edu no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on May 8 for graduating students and May 14 for all other students.

Weekly Posts

By 11:59 p.m. of the night (Tuesday) before each class meeting, post one paragraph for each of the following three questions on SurveyMonkey. Please include citations to page numbers from the readings, and be sure that you answer all three questions.

- What in the readings surprised and/or excited you the most and why?
- What in the readings troubled and/or upset you the most and why?
- What in the readings would you like covered in class for clarification or further discussion and why?

You may wish to draft your posts in a word processing document so that you will have a copy for your records. The cumulative length of your weekly posts should equal approximately 18-20 double-spaced pages.

Short Paper

A short paper of 5-6 double-spaced pages will be due via email to pcheng@eds.edu in Word format prior to class on Wednesday, March 19. For the paper, select three of the topics listed below and provide for each topic: (1) a brief overview of the key issues; (2) what you found most surprising about the topic; (3) the topic's relevance to contemporary life; and (4) how you might present that topic in an exciting way to individuals in a future ministry context (e.g., in a pastoral setting).

- Revelation
- Authority
- Trinity
- God
- Creation
- Providence
- Humanity
- Sin
- Saints
- Mary

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home, self-timed, open-book, three-hour exam of no more than 5-6 double-spaced pages. The questions will be in essay format, and you will have a choice of questions (e.g., 3 out of 4) to answer. The questions will be emailed to students immediately following the final class. The exam will be due via email to pcheng@eds.edu in Word format no later than Wednesday, May 7, at 5:00 p.m. ET for graduating students, and Tuesday, May 13, at 5:00 p.m. ET for all other students. Any requests for extensions must be directed to the Registrar at ccull@eds.edu. More information about the final exam will be provided during class.

Simulcast Course Expectations

This course will be simulcast. The following requirements will apply to students who are taking the course via simulcast:

- Follow the school's hardware requirements and guidelines; know your computer.
- Know how to use Adobe Connect, PowerCampus, and Canvas.
- Log in at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled course start time.
- The course will start on time, regardless of any individual technical issues. Although technical assistance will be available offline from the course technology assistant, the instructor's class time will not be used to address individual technical issues.
- The simulcast option will be available only to registered distributive learning students. All other students are required to attend the class in person.

Note for D.Min. and Other Advanced Students

Course work for all Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, and the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry. D.Min. students are encouraged to focus their course work on a particular subject germane to their anticipated thesis/project. D.Min. students are expected to submit a significant research paper of at least 20 pages on a topic relating to their program goals in lieu of the short paper and the final exam. Please discuss the topic of your paper in advance with the instructor.

Course Grading Criteria

A level – Submits work on time; proposes creative ideas in class sessions and online posts; demonstrates critical and creative thinking in the teaching presentation, short paper, and final exam. No unexcused absences.

B level – Submits work on time; shows enthusiasm in class session and online posts; demonstrates cogent thinking in the teaching presentation, short paper, and final exam. No more than one unexcused absence.

C level – Does not submit work on time; shows minimal engagement with the class sessions, online posts, teaching presentation, short paper, and/or final exam; or more than one unexcused absence.

No credit will be given for the class for anyone with three or more absences, whether or not such absences are excused.

Pass/Fail Option

Student must let the instructor know that they are electing this option by the end of class on Wednesday, February 5. The grading will be as follows:

- Pass: B or better (required of D.Min. students)
- Marginal Pass: B-

- Fail: Lower than B-

Extensions

Students who cannot finish the course requirements by May 13 must send a petition for an extension to Cecelia Cull in the Registrar’s Office. She can be reached via email at ccull@eds.edu.

Required Texts

The following required texts may be purchased online or at the Harvard Coop. These texts are also available on reserve at the Sherrill Library.

- Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd ed., ISBN 978-0819218971, \$24.00
- Justo L. González, *Essential Theological Terms*, ISBN 978-0664228101, \$25.00
- Rebecca S. Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor, eds., *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, ISBN 978-0800626969, \$30.00

Other Texts

The other required readings for the course will be available in PDF format through Canvas. Such readings are marked with “†” in the schedule below.

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Weekly Class Schedule

Classes will meet on the Wednesdays specified below from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. ET.

January 29 – Week 1	<p>Introduction</p> <p><u>Before our first class meeting, please: (1) read these materials; (2) post a brief introduction of yourself on Canvas; and (3) submit your first weekly post on SurveyMonkey no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday evening.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas and Wondra, pp. 1-21 (chapter 1, “Introduction”) • González, p. 170 (“Theology”) † Luke 15:11-32 † The Nicene Creed, in <i>Book of Common Prayer</i>, pp. 358-59 † Grenz and Olson, <i>Who Needs Theology?</i>, pp. 12-35
February 5 – Week 2	<p>Revelation; Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas and Wondra, pp. 22-66 (chapter 2, “Revelation”; chapter 3, “Authority”)

- González, pp. 42 (“Creeds”), 87 (“Inerrancy”), 87 (“Infallibility”), 145-48 (“Reason and Faith”), 152-53 (“Revelation”), 157-59 (“Scripture”), 172-73 (“Tradition”)
- † Cheng, *Radical Love*, pp. 11-23, 44-49
- † Chapman, *Anglican Theology*, pp. 199-210

February 12 – Week 3

Trinity

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 67-88 (chapter 4, “Trinity”)
- González, pp. 50 (“Economic Trinity”), 63-64 (“Filiation”), 164 (“Spiration”), 175-76 (“Trinity”)
- † LaCugna, “God in Communion with Us: The Trinity,” in LaCugna, ed., *Freeing Theology*, pp. 99-114

February 19 – Week 4

God; Creation; Providence

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 89-132 (chapter 5, “God”; chapter 6, “Creation”; chapter 7, “Providence”)
- González, pp. 22-23 (“Attributes (of God)”), 41-42 (“Creation”), 67-69 (“God”), 111 (“Miracles”), 142-43 (“Providence”), 169 (“Theodicy”)
- Chopp and Taylor, pp. 124-40 (DeVries, “Creation, Handicappism, and the Community of Differing Abilities”)

February 26 – Week 5

Humanity; Sin

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 133-57 (chapter 8, “Humanity”; chapter 9, “Sin”)
- González, pp. 8-9 (“Anthropology”), 62 (“Fall”), 82-83 (“Image of God”), 124 (“Original Sin”), 160-61 (“Sin”)
- Chopp and Taylor, pp. 141-69 (McFague, “Human Beings, Embodiment, and Our Home the Earth”)

March 5 – Week 6

Saints; Mary

- † Johnson, “Saints and Mary,” in Schüssler Fiorenza and Galvin, eds., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 145-77
- † Russell and Clarkson, *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, pp. 170-71 (“Mariology”)
- González, pp. 20 (“Assumption”), 28 (“Beatification”), 31-32 (“Canonization”), 36 (“Communion of Saints”), 83 (“Immaculate Conception”), 107-08 (“Mary”), 179-80 (“Virgin Birth”)
- † Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, pp. 139-58
- † Gebara and Bingemer, “Mary,” in Sobrino and Ellacuría, eds., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 165-77

March 12 – No Class (Spring Break)

March 19 – Week 7

Jesus Christ

Short paper due, prior to class, in Word format via email to pcheng@eds.edu

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 158-78 (chapter 10, “Christ”)
- González, pp. 34-35 (“Christology”), 84-86 (“Incarnation”)
- Chopp and Taylor, pp. 245-68 (Pawlikowski, “Christology, Anti-Semitism, and Christian-Jewish Bonding”)
- † Kwok, “Touching the Taboo: On the Sexuality of Jesus,” in Ellison and Douglas, eds., *Sexuality and the Sacred*, 2nd ed., pp. 119-34

March 26 – Week 8

Salvation; Justification; Election; Predestination

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 179-218 (chapter 11, “Salvation”; chapter 12, “Justification”; chapter 13, “Election and Predestination”)
- González, pp. 20-22 (“Atonement”), 52 (“Election”), 61-62 (“Faith”), 69-71 (“Grace”), 91 (“Justification”), 138-39 (“Predestination”), 162-63 (“Soteriology”), 184 (“Works”)
- † Brown and Parker, “For God So Loved the World?,” in Brown and Bohn, eds., *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse*, pp. 1-30

April 2 – Week 9

Holy Spirit; Sanctification

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 219-27 (chapter 14, “Holy Spirit and Sanctification”)
- González, pp. 64 (“*Filioque*”), 134 (“Pneumatology”), 155 (“Sanctification”), 164-65 (“Spirit, Holy”)
- † Kim, *The Holy Spirit, Chi, and the Other*, pp. 1-62

April 9 – Week 10

Church

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 257-74 (chapter 17, “Church”)
- González, pp. 15 (“Apostolicity”), 32 (“Catholicity”), 35-36 (“Church”), 49-50 (“Ecclesiology”), 78 (“Holy”), 106 (“Marks of the Church”), 177-78 (“Unity of the Church”)
- Chopp and Taylor, pp. 303-25 (Thistlethwaite and Hodgson, “The Church, Classism, and Ecclesial Community”)

April 16 – Week 11

Sacraments

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 275-90 (chapter 18, “Sacraments”)
- González, pp. 26-27 (“Baptism”), 56-58 (“Eucharist”), 129 (“Penance”), 154-55 (“Sacrament”), 174-75 (“Transubstantiation”)
- † Glaser, *Coming Out As Sacrament*, pp. 1-15

April 23 – Week 12

Worship; Ministry; Missiology

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 291-311 (chapter 19, “Worship”; chapter 20, “Ministry”)

- González, pp. 15 (“Apostolic Succession”), 28-29 (“Bishop”), 86-87 (“Inculturation”), 111-12 (“*Missio Dei*”), 112 (“Mission”), 184-86 (“Worship”), 186-87 (“Year, Liturgical”)
- † Duraisingh, “From Church-Shaped Mission to Mission-Shaped Church,” *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 7-28

April 30 – Week 13

History; Eschatology; Conclusion

- Thomas and Wondra, pp. 228-56 (chapter 15, “History”; chapter 16, “Eschatology”)
- González, pp. 6-7 (“Angelology”), 12 (“Apocatastasis”), 44 (“Demons”), 54-55 (“Eschatology”), 72 (“Heaven”), 73 (“Hell”), 77-78 (“History”), 90 (“Judgment”), 109-10 (“Millennialism”), 127 (“Parousia”), 143 (“Purgatory”), 156 (“Satan”), 178 (“Universalism”)
- Chopp and Taylor, pp. 346-73 (Evans, “Eschatology, White Supremacy, and the Beloved Community”)

May 7

Final exam for graduating students due by 5:00 p.m. ET in Word format via email to pcheng@eds.edu.

May 13

Final exam for all other students due by 5:00 p.m. ET. Any requests for extensions must be directed to the Registrar at ccull@eds.edu.