

TR105 Constructive Theology
Term: Spring 2010
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Course Description

A course that introduces the students to the nature and task of constructive theology, theological method, and the classical as well as contemporary interpretations on major doctrines, with the expectation that the students will acquire the necessary background and hermeneutical skills for their own constructive work. As a course committed to the global expressions of theology, it draws various theological voices into the conversation in order to shed light on the assigned topics.

Objectives

At the end of the semester the students will:

1. Be able to name and articulate the main tenets of the major doctrines of the church.
2. Encounter contemporary interpretations and constructions of major theological themes.
3. Be able to locate themselves within the spectrum of theological ideas and movements.
4. Acquire hermeneutical skills to interpret any situation or material theologically.
5. Acquire and develop constructive theological skills.
6. Be able to construct a theological project that expresses their deep convictions and is faithful to their faith heritage and creatively responsive to the context.
7. Understand the connection of their theological ideas and faith journey.

Course Expectations and Requirements:

1. Regular class attendance and active participation in class discussions
2. Careful reading of assigned texts
3. Take leadership in centering/meditation
4. Leadership in small group discussion
5. Take home assignment during the reading week. Date due: April 8.
6. Regular credit students: Final paper (6,000 words)
Date due: May 20.

General Criteria for Grading Papers

Basic grasp of the particular themes or issues in question. In order to reach the level of basic understanding, students will have to read the assigned materials, understand the structure of the arguments presented in these materials, and be able to present their thoughts on these matters in a coherent manner. Since this is the most basic of levels, the evaluation is normally in the **C** range.

Basic grasp of the themes or issues in question **and** the ability to engage in an extended exposition of their significance, placing them in their appropriate historical or theological context, and providing critical assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. This is the **B** level and presupposes the first level. What is added is analytical and critical thinking.

If independent, constructive, and creative thinking is added to basic grasp and critical

exposition, then one moves into the **A** category.

Students should keep in mind that written work will be evaluated in terms of both content and form. Deficiencies in form will have an impact on the grade.

Required Texts

1. Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
2. Paul F. Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).
3. Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004).
4. Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004).
5. Catherine Keller, *On Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).
6. Rebecca Button Prichard, *Sensing the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Feminist Perspective* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1999).
7. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "The Church as a Household of Life Abundant: Reimagining the Church in a Context of Global Economics," in Kathleen Darby Ray, *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 172 -188.
8. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Peace in the Era of Predatory Globalization and Global Terror: The Church as a Human Community of Peacebuilders."
<http://globalministries.org/mee/from-war-to-peace/peace-in-the-era-of-predatory.html>.
9. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Does Christianity have a Monopoly on Salvation?" in *The Progressive Catholic Voice*, June 2008.
<http://www.progressivecatholicvoice.org/enewsletters/index-June08.html#monopoly>.

Class Hours

6:00 – 9:15 p.m. Thursdays

Class Format

6:00 – 6:15 –Centering/Opening Meditation
6:15 - 7:30 - Lecture
7:30 - 7:45 - Break
7:45 - 8:35 - Group Discussion
8:35 - 9:15 - Plenary

Schedule of Sessions, Topics, and Readings

February 11: Walk-through the Syllabus, Student Introductions, and Introductory Lecture

The Character and Task of Constructive Theology, its Context, and Method

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 1-19.

Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*, 1-25.

Formation of Discussion Groups

February 18: The Character of Theology and its Method: Sources, Norms, and Authority

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 20-43.

McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 27-63, 65-98.

Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 11-30.

Small Group Discussion

February 25: Method: Sources, Norms, and Authority
Guest Lecturer: Dr. Nancy Victorin-Vangerud

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 44-63.

Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*, 27-43.

Small Group Discussion

March 4: God-World Relation: Creation and Providence

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 64-91.

McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 131-157.

Small Group Discussion

March 11: God-World Relation: Right Relation in the Cosmos

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 92-138.

Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*, 45-90.

Small Group Discussion

March 18: Anthropology: Human Being, and Community

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 139-162.

McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 99-129.

Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 185-210.

Small Group Discussion

March 22-26 Reading Week

April 1-6 Easter Recess

April 8: Anthropology: Sin and Evil

Readings:

Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 31-73.

McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 197-212.

Small Group Discussion

April 15: Christology and the Question of Salvation

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 163-196.

McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 159-195.

Keller, *On the Face of Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*, 133-155.

Small Group Discussion

April 22: Christology, Salvation, and Other Religions

Readings:

Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, 61-101.

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 197-222, 301-329.

Fernandez, "Does Christianity have a Monopoly on Salvation?" in *The Progressive Catholic Voice*, June 2008.

Small Group Discussion

April 29: Church, Mission, and the Reign of God

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 248-273.

Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, 102-164.

Fernandez, "The Church as a Household of Life Abundant: Reimagining the Church in the Context of Global Economics," in Ray, *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy and God*, 172 -188.

Small Group Discussion

May 6: Church, Ministry, Worship, and Sacraments

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 274-300.

Prichard, *Sensing the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Feminist Perspective*, 99-120.

Fernandez, "Peace in the Era of Predatory Globalization and Global Terror: The Church as a Human Community of peacebuilders."

Small Group Discussion

May 13: Spirit, Church, and Spirituality

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 223-245.

Prichard, *Sensing the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Feminist Perspective*, 9-51.

Small Group Discussion

May 20: Eschatology and the Question of Suffering and Hope

Readings:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 330-353.

Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 211-232.

Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process*, 159-176.

Small Group Discussion

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Policy on Extensions

The work for a course is terminated at the end of the final class session. Students' performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructor, in which case a formal petition for extension must be approved by the instructor by the end of the final class session. Extensions of course work beyond the end of the semester will be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. Each instructor will include this policy on each course syllabus as well as the criteria by which she or he will grant such extraordinary exception.

In the event such an extension is approved, the instructor shall file the extension form with the Registrar by the date grades are due. The Student Review Committee shall monitor extensions. If no petition for extension is filed, a final grade will be submitted.

An extension may be granted for a period not to exceed six months from the end of the term. If the work is not completed by the date petitioned, a final grade will be submitted. Any renewal of an extension must be approved by the instructor and filed with the Registrar prior to the due date on the original petition. No extension or its renewal will exceed six months from the end of the term in question.

