

TR608: "Christology"  
Paul E. Capetz, instructor  
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities  
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Purpose of the Course: In this seminar we shall examine the theological question of "christology": Who was/is Jesus and why do Christians believe Jesus is important for our relation to God and our neighbor or, in traditional terms, "salvation."

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will understand and be able to articulate how the christological question itself was formulated and answered in the "ecumenical creeds" of the patristic period (Nicaea and Chalcedon).
2. Students will understand and be able to articulate how the christological question underwent a crucial transformation in the modern period as a result of the introduction of historical-critical methods of investigating the New Testament as sources for our knowledge of Jesus.
3. Students will understand and be able to articulate the major systematic questions that have been at issue in the christological discussion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., liberal, neo-orthodox, etc).
4. Students will understand and be able to articulate the major challenges to inherited christological doctrines posed by contemporary theologians (e.g., religious pluralism, post-Holocaust theology, feminism, liberation theologies, etc.).
5. Students will be able to formulate and to defend their own developing answer to the christological question, however understood.

Learning Activities:

1. Students will read books assigned in the syllabus and come to each class session prepared to discuss the issues raised therein.
2. Students will lead at least one class discussion on a section of the assigned reading for that week.
3. Students will write two short papers (3-5 double-spaced pages) in answer to questions handed out by the instructor beforehand that will allow them to demonstrate their successful mastery of "Learning Objectives" #1-3.

4. Students will write a final paper (10-15 double-spaced pages) on any of the special topics falling under “Learning Objectives” #4-5 (and there are others besides those listed which we can discuss).
  - a. This paper is intended as an opportunity for students to go in-depth on some aspect of the christological question and to articulate a constructive position with respect to it, including giving reasons for the position adopted in light of possible critical objections to it.
  - b. Prior to the writing of this paper, each student must have a conversation with the instructor about the specific nature of the paper you hope to write. Toward the middle of the semester, therefore, students should make an appointment to see the instructor in his office to discuss a possible paper topic.

Required Texts:

Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

Fredriksen is a convert from Christianity to Judaism who is particularly concerned about the ways in which Jews and Judaism are portrayed in the New Testament and in the history of Christian theology.

Roger Haight, S.J., *Jesus: Symbol of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999).

Haight is a Roman Catholic theologian who was stripped by the Vatican of his right to teach Catholic theology as well as to publish on account of the writing of this book on christology.

Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Macmillan, 1964).

Essential little dictionary of technical terms in theology—use it often!

Note on the New Testament:

If you haven't already the New Testament, it is highly recommended that you do so this semester. Each student should have a copy of the “New Revised Standard Translation” (NRSV), particularly either *The Harper Collins Study Bible* or *The Oxford Annotated Bible* on account of the scholarly notes therein.

Class Schedule: Monday evenings 6:00-9:15 p.m.

September 13: Introduction to the Seminar and to One Another

September 20: “The World of the New Testament” and “The World of Judaism”  
Read Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*, pp. ix-xii, 3-93

September 27: “Jesus of Nazareth” and “The Christs of the Churches”  
Read Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*, pp. 94-215

October 4: “Questions of Method”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. xi-xiv, 507-517 (Appendix 1 and 2), 3-51

October 11: “Appropriating Jesus in Christology” and “The God of Jesus”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 55-118

October 18: “Jesus’ Resurrection” and “The Pluralism of the New Testament Soteriologies and Christologies”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 119-184  
**FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE**

October 25: NO CLASS (Reading Week)

November 1: “The Structure of Christology” and “Development of Classical Soteriology”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 187-243

November 8: “Development of Classical Christology” and Interpreting Nicaea and Chalcedon”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 244-298

November 15: “Beyond Schleiermacher and Barth” and “Jesus as Savior”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 301-362

November 22: “Liberation and Salvation” and “Jesus and the World’s Religions”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 363-423  
**SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE**

November 29: “The Divinity of Jesus Christ” and “Trinity”  
Read Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, pp. 424-491

December 6: NO READING ASSIGNED (Plan to bring an “abstract” of the paper you intend to write so that it may be shared with and discussed by the class)

December 13: **FINAL PAPER DUE** (*Feliz Navidad*)

### Policy on Extensions:

Written work is to be handed in on the date assigned in the syllabus unless arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor. But late work will be accepted by the instructor only for reasons of extreme duress (e.g., an illness or a death in the family). If a student is not able to complete all work by the end of the semester, the student is obligated to file a formal petition (which includes securing the instructor's permission) by the last official meeting of the course at the latest.

### Policy on Auditors:

Auditors are welcome in the class, provided they commit themselves to keeping up with the assigned reading so that their comments and questions in class discussion are informed by knowledge of the content of the texts being studied.

### Policy on Inclusive Language:

In speaking and writings students are expected to use "inclusive" language for human beings (e.g., "humankind," not "mankind," etc.) For fuller explanation, see the statement in the *UTS Masters Student Handbook*.

Recommended Texts in Constructive Christology: (this list is only suggestive, not exhaustive; the literature is enormous!)

Gustav Aulen, *Christus Victor: A Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

Classic study by a famous Swedish theologian.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960).

German Lutheran pastor and theologian, martyred by the Nazis, asks "Who is Christ for us today?"

Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys of the Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroads, 1988).

Christological reflections from the perspective of an Asian-American feminist and process theologian.

Tyron L. Inbody, *The Many Faces of Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002).

Inbody surveys the major issues (historical criticism, the classical creeds, Christian understandings of Judaism after the Holocaust, religious

pluralism, and the atonement) as well as important movements in contemporary christology (evangelical, liberal, postliberal, liberation, feminist, and womanist theologies).

D. M. Baillie, *God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (London: Faber Paperbacks, 1961; originally published 1948).

An insightful discussion about and contemporary retrieval of the classical creedal affirmations regarding the incarnation and atonement.

Dawn DeVries, *Jesus Christ in the Preaching of Calvin and Schleiermacher* (Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1996).

Compares the sermons of a pre-modern and a modern Protestant theologian to see what difference, if any, the introduction of historical-critical methods made to how the gospel was preached.

Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

Now classic statement of christology from a womanist perspective.

John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990).

Reliable survey by famous Anglican theologian.

Jose Miguez-Bonino, ed., *Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies* (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1983).

Anthology edited by famous Latin American liberation theologian.

Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

Classic nineteenth-century statement of liberal Germany theology from the year 1900.

Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

Famous book by German "theologian of hope."

Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001).

Classic book by important Latin American theologian.

John B. Cobb, Jr., *Christ in a Pluralistic Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975).

A suggestive proposal for a new “logos” christology from the perspective of process theology.

Douglas F. Ottati, *Jesus Christ and Christian Vision* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996; originally published 1989).

Ottati’s is a liberal christology from the perspective of the Reformed tradition of Calvin.

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism* (New York: Crossroads, 1981).

Discussion concerning christology from a leading feminist and liberation theologian.

Hans W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

Frei is the pivotal figure in the development of “narrative (or postliberal) theology” that stands in the tradition of Barth.

Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

Important work by a Roman Catholic New Testament scholar on the questions pertaining to a feminist christology.

Wayne A. Meeks, *Christ is the Question* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006).

Leading New Testament scholar reflects upon the question of the historical Jesus in modern theology and argues that it is *not* the proper question for christology.

Arthur E. Zonnoni, ed., *Jews and Christians Speak of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

Anthology takes up issues raised by post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Recommended Reading for Historical Background of Modern Scholarship on the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith (for references to literature

representative of the “third quest” in our contemporary period, see the notes and bibliography in Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History*).

Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1961; originally published 1906).

This classic work, narrating the history of “Life of Jesus” research in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is the benchmark that is understood to have brought the “first quest” of liberal theology to an end. Especially worth reading are the chapters on David Friedrich Straus (pp.68-95) who was the first to propose the category of “mythology” for understanding the gospel narratives as a third alternative to both supernaturalism and rationalism. Strauss also made famous the disjunctive phrase contrasting “the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.” Next in importance is the chapter “Thoroughgoing Skepticism and Thoroughgoing Eschatology” which sets forth the two major options at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represented by William Wrede (skepticism) and Schweitzer himself (eschatology).

Ernst Käsemann, “The Problem of the Historical Jesus,” in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

This lecture, presented in 1953 at the annual meeting of the “Old Marburgers” (students and friends of Rudolf Bultmann), initiated the second or post-Bultmannian quest which was dubbed “the new quest” by James M. Robinson in his monograph *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1959). Instead of trying to write a “biography” of Jesus along the lines of the failed liberal quest, Käsemann proposed raising the question of the material continuity amid historical discontinuity between the proclamation of the historical Jesus and the Easter *kerygma* proclaiming him as Christ.

Rudolf Bultmann, “The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus,” in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), pp. 15-42.

Bultmann, the greatest NT scholar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, responded critically to the “new quest” initiated by his students. Aside from his controversial proposal for a “de-mythologizing” of the NT message (see his famous article “New Testament and Mythology,” in *New Testament and Mythology and Other Essays*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984] pp. 1-43), Bultmann (along with Martin Dibelius and Karl Ludwig Schmidt) was famous for his pioneering work in “form criticism,” which (following the skepticism of Wrede) assumed that the narratives about Jesus in the synoptic tradition tell us more about the

early church that transmitted and reshaped these stories for its own purposes than about the historical Jesus himself. Bultmann believed the new quest is misguided and, moreover, is theologically objectionable because it seeks to prove the truth of the *kerygma* by securing it in historical facts.

Herbert Braun, "The Meaning of New Testament Christology," in *God and Christ: Existence and Province*, ed. Herbert Braun, *Journal for Theology and the Church* (New York: Harper, 1968), pp. 89-127.

The most radical disciple of the Bultmann school, Braun illustrates the growth in christological titles predicated of Jesus in the various layers of the New Testament and argues that, while the christology is variable, the understanding of human existence in relation to God remains constant. Bultmann praised Braun as having most consistently implemented his de-mythologizing program.

Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Irene and Frasar McLuskey (New York: Harper, 1960).

The most important book on Jesus to issue from the new quest.

Schubert M. Ogden, *Christ without Myth: A Study Based on the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1961).

Ogden criticizes Bultmann for not carrying through his de-mythologizing program consistently insofar as he wants to claim that salvation (or "authentic existence" in Bultmann's existentialist terminology) is a possibility in fact only for those who have faith in the *kerygma*.

Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966).

Brilliant analysis of the problems facing Christian beliefs about Jesus in the light of historical-critical research and trenchant critique of some of the major theological attempts to deal with them such as those of Barth and Tillich.

Van A. Harvey and Schubert M. Ogden, "How New is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?" in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, pp. 197-242.

Critique of the new quest as not being all that different from the old (first) quest.

Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998).

Powell presents the viewpoints of the major representatives of the current "third quest of the historical Jesus" (Borg, Crossan, Sanders, Wright, Meier, and the Jesus Seminar).

Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: Harper, 1984).

Theological reflections by a leading New Testament scholar engaged in the so-called "third quest."

## THE CREED OF NICAEA (325)

(CREED OF 318 FATHERS)

We believe in one God, the Father All Governing [*pantokratora*], creator [*poiētēn*] of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only begotten, that is, from the essence [reality] of the Father, [*ek tēs ousias tou patros*], God from God, Light from Light, true God

from true God, begotten not created [*poiēthenta*], of the same essence [reality] as the Father [*homoousion tō patri*], through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, becoming human [*enanthrōpēsanta*]. He suffered and the third day he rose, and ascended into the heavens. And he will come to judge both the living and the dead.

And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit.

But, those who say, Once he was not, or he was not before his generation, or he came to be out of nothing, or who assert that he, the Son of God, is of a different *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or that he is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.

← This is the original version of the Nicene Creed, formulated at Nicaea in 325

## THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

(CREED OF 150 FATHERS)

We believe in one God, the Father All Governing [*pantokratora*], creator [*poiētēn*] of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time [*pro pantōn tōn aiōnōn*], Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created [*poiēthenta*], of the same essence [reality] as the Father [*homoousion tō patri*], through Whom all things came into being, Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human [*enanthrōpēsanta*]. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His Kingdom shall have no end [*telos*].

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets; and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

← This is the official version of the Nicene Creed, revised at Constantinople in 381

## THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect [*teleion*] both in deity [*theotēti*] and also in human-ness [*anthrōpotēti*]; this selfsame one is also actually [*alēthōs*] God and actually man, with a rational soul [*psychēs logikēs*] and a body. He is of the same reality as God [*homoousion tō patri*] as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves [*homoousion hēmin*] as far as his human-ness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began [*pro aiōnōn*] he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer [*theotokos*] in respect of his human-ness [*anthrōpotētia*].

← anti-Arian

← anti-Arian

← communicatio idionatum

[We also teach] that we apprehend [*gnōridzomenon*] this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten-in two natures [*duo physēs*]; [and we do this] without confusing the two natures [*asunkutōs*], without transmuting one nature into the other [*atrep-tōs*], without dividing them into two separate categories [*adiairetōs*], without contrasting them according to area or function [*achōristōs*]. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" [*idiōtētos*] of each nature are conserved and both natures concur [*syn-trechousēs*] in one "person" [*prosōpon*] and in one hypostasis. They are not divided or cut into two *prosōpa*, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of the Fathers [N] has handed down [*paradedōke*] to us.

← Nicene Creed

1) Alexandrian

2) Antiochene

