

WELCOME!

05-510S: SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
Michaelmas Term, 2000
MW 1:00_3:30

Instructor: Dr. David S. Cunningham

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and Availability: I am normally in my office Monday through Thursday, and sometimes on Fridays as well.

Feel free to drop by; but if you expect to need more than a few minutes, please use the sign-up sheet, or make an appointment via phone or e_mail.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This course provides a historical and systematic study of basic Christian doctrine as it has been understood within the Anglican tradition (but including readings from the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Methodist traditions as well). The trinitarian structure of the Apostles' Creed provides the foundation for the course. Readings will include narratives and sermons as well as analytical and constructive texts. We will also read one systematic theology in order to observe how numerous Christian doctrines can be woven together into a coherent whole. Students will be encouraged to consider the relevance of Christian doctrine for the mission of the Church, the formation of Christian character, and the practice of everyday life.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Cynthia S. W. Crysdale, *Embracing Travail: Retrieving the Cross for Today* (New York: Continuum Press, 1999)

Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, *Gender and the Nicene Creed* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse Publishing, 1995)

Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward A Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995)

Nicholas Lash, *Believing Three Ways In One God: A Reading of the Apostles' Creed* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992)

— continued —

Flannery O'Connor, *Three By Flannery O'Connor*, with an Introduction by Sally Fitzgerald (New York: New American Library, Signet Classics, 1983)

Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973)

Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)

Rowan Williams, *A Ray of Darkness: Sermons and Reflections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 1995)

All students will also need a Study Bible. I will use the NRSV, which I recommend. Other acceptable translations include the RSV, NB, REB, NIV, or the Jerusalem Bible.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

Note: In addition to these readings, stories and sermons by O'Connor and Williams will be read throughout the term, as will chapters in Wainwright's *Doxology* (see "GW" below).

Week Dates

1 Sept 25-27

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<u>Oct 2-4</u>	<u>Topic for Discussion</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>GW</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Oct 9-11	Practices and Revelation	Goizueta		
Oct 16-18	God and Creation	Lash, Geitz	Intro & 1	
Oct 23-25	Sin and Incarnation	Lash, Geitz	2	
Oct 30-Nov 1	Suffering and Redemption	Crysdale		Paper #1 due
Nov 6-24	Spirit and Trinity	Lash, Geitz	3	
Nov 27-29	Church and Mission	various	4-6	
Dec 4-6	PLUNGE and FALL BREAK			Paper #2 due
	Baptism and Eucharist	Schmemmann	7-8	
	Love and Death	Schmemmann	Conc	Final Exam

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

1. This course is not lecture-based. Instead, both the instructor and students will raise broad questions that will initiate wide-ranging discussions, in which everyone is expected to participate. Some of this discussion will take place in small groups, but most will involve the whole class. Students will have an opportunity to continue to conversation by means of a web-based bulletin board. This latter activity is not required, but may allow some students to participate more fully in the discussion.

2. Our time together this quarter is very limited, and it is essential that class start on time (1:00) each day. Please come a few minutes early if you find that you need time to “center down” and prepare to work. Class will continue until 3:30 each day in order to make up the time that will be missed during the “plunge.” We will take a 5 minute break part-way through each class session (no promises about exactly when!).
3. You will be asked to complete a reading assignment, and to reflect on the reading in a journal, before the beginning of each class session. (I expect to offer a choice of either paper or electronic formats; more on the journals below.) The seminary’s general expectation is that you can expect to spend an average of two hours outside of class for each hour in class. We meet 5 hours per week for eight weeks of the quarter, so you can expect to spend about 10 hours per week outside class. Please see me if you find that the regular assignments are taking you significantly longer. No reading will be assigned during the plunge or break weeks (except for a normal-sized assignment for the day that class begins again).
4. The average amount of reading is about 150 pages per week — roughly equally divided between relatively easy material (popular pieces and fiction) and more challenging texts (doctrinal and systematic theologies). Please be careful not to allow yourself to fall behind! Finishing the reading before each class session will be essential if you are to participate adequately in class and reflect on the readings in your journal.
5. You will write two 5-page papers during the course. These are not research papers. They will be graded with attention to three factors, in the following order of importance: 1. engagement with the course material and readings; 2. personal reflection on and appropriation of the material (making it “your own”); 3. mechanics (grammar, format, style).
6. There will be a take-home examination at the end of the term, testing your knowledge of Christian theology and your ability to apply this knowledge in practice.
7. However, I have been known to make the final exam optional, if the class has done a good job of keeping up with the material and participating on all levels. This means the class as a whole — not just two or three enthusiastic types.
8. As part of this course, you will be assigned to a small group. The purpose of these groups is to provide a vehicle for more intensive and detailed discussion than is possible with the whole class. I encourage group study, peer-editing of paper drafts, and similar forms of cooperative learning. Some forms of collaboration will be assigned, but students are expected to take the initiative for much of this work.

THE JOURNAL

Before most of our class sessions, you will reflect on the reading material in a journal. This provides a good opportunity to organize your thoughts about the reading and to prepare for the discussion. It also helps me to get a sense of how well students are processing the reading. There is no standard form for the journal entry; instead, you are encouraged to write about your *reactions to* and *reflections on* the material. I generally expect students to write for at least 20 to 30 minutes in preparation for each class session. In some cases, I will offer a few questions to consider when reading the material. These will provide a "place to begin" for those who find themselves otherwise stumped by the reading. However, I will not do this often; and when I do, I will offer them *as suggestions only*. I want the journals to be as free_form as possible.

I will also ask you to exchange journals within small groups, and to read and comment briefly on one another's entries. This helps to develop more conversations outside of class. To make this work, all the members of a group must choose the same journaling option (web-based or paper-based). If you write your journal entries electronically, they must be posted to the web (details forthcoming); other members of your group will read them there and respond to them. If you choose a paper-based system, your journal will be rotated through your group. Paper-based journals must therefore be *bound* notebooks, and must be distinct from whatever you use to take notes in class. No typed insertions or looseleaf binders allowed! If you prefer to type, choose the web-based system.

Journal entries must be posted to the web (or turned to my office) by 11:00 a.m. on the day of class. The purpose of this deadline is to give me time to look over the comments and questions before class and thereby gain a sense of students' reactions to the material.

GRADES

NOTE. Knowledge of the Bible is essential for systematic theology. All students who have not passed the Bible Content Exam by Friday, December 1, must sit an alternative one-hour Bible exam, the results of which will count for one-third of the final exam grade.

DAILY WORK: 50%

Participation (in class, in groups, and on the web): 30%
Journal entries (whether paper- or web-based): 20%

ONE-TIME PROJECTS: 50%

Two papers: 10% and 15%
Final exam: 25%

Thank you for your presence in this course. I look forward to an enjoyable and exciting eight weeks — working together, teaching one another, and learning from one another.