

## Christology

Fall 2016

Sarah Morice Brubaker ([sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu](mailto:sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu))

Phillips Theological Seminary

### I. Learning Goals:

Students who successfully complete this class will be able to:

1. **Remember** and **describe** in their own words two Christological models; as well as the key theologians, time periods, and political contexts with which those models are associated.
2. **Identify, compare, contrast,** and **evaluate** the assumptions behind two Christological models.
3. **Inquire** about Christology in ways that are probing, urgent, timely, enduring, and provocative; and **find information** that helps one to address those inquiries.
4. **Synthesize** elements of existing Christological models and **propose** a Christology that the individual student is able to claim, having taken into account its ethical implications and its appropriateness for the students' own contexts and for others' contexts.
5. **Argue for, receive feedback** on, and **integrate feedback into** their chosen Christological model.
6. **Reflect on one's own learning** in ways that foster lifelong growth.

### II. Means of Achieving the Learning Goals:

Learning will happen through:

- **Attentive general participation**, which consists of weekly postings in response to a particular prompt. Depending on the goals of a lesson, the instructor may ask for one, two, or three posts for that week. Instructions will be given in the video lecture.
- **Attentive reading** of assigned texts and viewing of instructor lectures, as demonstrated by the content of the student's postings.
- **Learning Dossier**, completed in parts, with the entire dossier comprising your portfolio assignment. The learning dossier's components have different instructions and submission guidelines:
  - Week Two submission on the Class Learning Goals, to be posted in the designated Moodle Forum. Instructions will be given in the video lecture. (*Estimated time needed: 1-2 hours*)
  - Week Four submission on Personal Learning Goals, to be posted in the designated Moodle Forum. Instructions will be given in the video lecture. (*Estimated time needed: 1 hour*)
  - Week Six submission on Christological Models, to be submitted via email to [sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu](mailto:sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu). For this assignment, please write two, one-page (approx.. 250-word) summaries of a Christological model discussed in *The Christological Controversy*; followed by one page (approx. 250 words) in which you briefly compare and contrast the two models and evaluate their assumptions in historical context. Please cite text sources following the style guide; you need not

cite the class lectures. These will be distributed to the rest of the class for feedback, with student names removed. (*Estimated time needed: 4.5-5.5 hours*)

- Week Seven peer feedback on Christological Models, to be posted in the designated Moodle forums. Instructions will be given in the video lecture. (*Estimated time needed: 3 hours. This will be your only posting assignment in Week Eight.*)
  - Week Ten submission on Christological Questions, to be posted in the designated Moodle forum. Instructions will be given in the video lecture. (*Estimated time needed: 1-2 hours*)
  - Week Twelve submission and feedback on Christological Proposals, to be posted in the designated Moodle forum. (*Estimated time needed: 4-5 hours. This will be your only posting assignment in Week Twelve.*)
  - Final submission, due December 16. (*Estimated time needed: 8-10 hours*) Students are asked to compile and revisit all components of the dossier, and annotate them in the margins with reflections on their own learning. Annotations should include moments where insight is clear; moments of discovery; and moments where the student has changed their mind from what they originally wrote. In addition, the student should compose three new learning artifacts:
    - (i) 3-5 pages in which the student repeats the Class Learning Goals exercise from Week Two, presumably with much more depth and breadth reflecting the student's learning during the semester.
    - (ii) Approximately 2 pages in which the student compares the Class Learning Goals exercise from Week Two with the Class Learning Goals exercise completed now, at the end of the semester. The student should reflect on what this reveals about their learning.
    - (iii) Approximately 2 pages in which the student reflects on their Personal Learning Goals from week 4, and answers the questions: How would you rephrase or re-articulate these goals now, in light of what you've learned? How have you made progress toward these goals? How might you continue to grow in the areas of insight you've identified? Are there any goals you wish to add for your own lifelong learning?
- **Please note:** Some elements of the class are counted twice for the purposes of grading and for the purposes of clock-hours. For example, the submissions of Week Two, Week Four, Week Seven, Week Ten, and Week Twelve will also fulfill part or all of your posting requirements for the week.

### III. Definition of Class Session

Each class session will open at Wednesday noon, Tulsa local time, and will close Wednesday noon, Tulsa local time. Since most of our learning will take place through student interaction with each other, should make every effort to avoid consistently posting first or consistently posting last. This is one item assessed on the participation rubric.

#### **IV. Required Readings**

Our learning and discussion will be anchored by the following texts:

Paula Frederiksen, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity

Vintage, 2000

ISBN-10: 0679767460

List Price: \$17.00

Selections from Richard Norris and William Rusch, ed. Christological Controversy (Sources of Early Christian Thought)

Fortress, 1980

ISBN-10: 0800614119

List Price: \$24.00

Shawn Kelley, Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology, and the Form of Modern Biblical Scholarship (Biblical Limits)

Routledge, 2002

ISBN-10: 0415283736

List price: \$42.95

Stephen Prothero, American Jesus: How the Son of God Became A National Icon

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004

ISBN-10: 0374529566

List price:\$17.00

Kelly Brown Douglas, The Black Christ

Orbis, 1993

ISBN-10: 0883449390

List price: \$20.00

The postings by the other members of the class.

Outside research that our inquiries lead students to pursue and share with the rest of the class, within the time constraints that are appropriate to a 3 credit hour course.

## V. Student Assessment

Students will be assessed according to the following rubrics.

General Participation Rubric	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Has the student consistently participated in the class discussion in an attentive, considerate way?	16	12	8	4	0
2. Has the student followed the prompt given by the professor and written a response that does what the prompt asks?	16	12	8	4	0
3. Do the student's comments show that they have completed and thought about the reading and viewed the lecture in advance of the class?	16	12	8	4	0
4. Have the student's comments stayed on topic? Has the student refrained from devoting too much time to issues of personal concern that are beyond the scope of the class and do not contribute to group learning?	16	12	8	4	0
5. Has the student consistently engaged with others in the class? If necessary, has the student modulated their posting schedule to facilitate interaction? Has the student avoided <i>always</i> being the first to post or <i>always</i> being the last to post?	16	12	8	4	0
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE: 80 points</b>					

<b>Dossier Rubric</b>						
	<b>Goal 1: Remember and describe.</b>	<b>Goal 2: Evaluate.</b>	<b>Goal 3: Inquire and find out.</b>	<b>Goal 4: Synthesize and propose.</b>	<b>Goal 5: Make an argument and integrate feedback.</b>	<b>Goal 6: Reflect on your own learning.</b>
<i>(week two)</i> Class Learning Goals	n/a	n/a	5 points	n/a	n/a	5 points
<i>(week four)</i> Personal Learning Goals	5 points	n/a	5 points	n/a	n/a	5 points
<i>(week six)</i> Christological Models	5 points	5 points	5 points	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>(week seven)</i> Christological Models feedback	5 points	5 points	n/a	n/a	5 points	5 points
<i>(week ten)</i> Christological Questions	n/a	5 points	10 points	5 points	n/a	5 points
<i>(week twelve)</i> Christological Proposals	5 points	5 points	5 points	15 points	10 points	n/a
<i>(December 16)</i> Final Dossier Submission	5 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	20 points
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 170</b>						

Final letter grades earned in the class correspond to the following percentages:

94.00-100% = A

90.00-93.99 = A-

87.00-89.99 = B+

84.00-86.99 = B

80.00-83.99 = B-

77.00-79.99 = C+

74.00-76.99 = C

70.0-73.99 = C-

67.00-69.99 = D+

64.00-66.99 = D

60.00-63.99 = D-

Below 60 = F/not possible to earn credit for the course

The professor reserves the right to curve the grades if she deems that it will give a more accurate picture of whether and to what extent students have achieved the course goals.

## **VI. Definition of a Credit Hour**

In accordance with regulations announced by the United States Department of Education in October 2010, the PTS faculty defines one semester-hour of academic credit as that which may be granted for successfully completing over the course of a semester a set of required learning activities representing approximately forty-five clock hours of graduate-level study. The workload/credit calculations related to the documentation of student learning are based on projections of the minimum time that a typical PTS student should anticipate spending in each course in direct instruction by the instructor(s), recommended reading and library research, synchronous and asynchronous online discussion, creative theological reflection and writing, content review and testing procedures, and other appropriate educational assignments designed by the instructor to ensure that students achieve the learning objectives of the course as published in the course syllabus.

## **VII. Attendance**

According to PTS policy, any student who misses 20% or more of the class contact hours for a course, for any reason, cannot pass or successfully audit that course. **To be counted present, the student must post during the window for that class period. The only extensions are those made available to the class as a whole, due to delays in the course content being made available to students.** The instructor will communicate with a student if and when the student is approaching this limit. The intention of this policy is not to be punitive, but to recognize that students should retake courses for credit if they miss a significant number of the class contact hours.

**Auditors** are welcome to participate in all aspects of the course. To have their attendance recorded, auditors have the option of:

1. Posting in one of the course discussion forums, or
2. Emailing the instructor during the week summarizing what parts of the course materials they accessed during the week. (The instructor may check these reports against Moodle's records.)

## **VIII. Academic Integrity**

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Failing to give appropriate credit for someone else's words.
- Passing off someone else's words as your own.
- Not citing where you got a fact or piece of information, even if it doesn't appear in a direct quote.
- Making up/fabricating footnotes and citations, either from sources that don't exist, or from sources that bear no relation to the material to which the citation is linked, or from sources assigned for the class or otherwise without evidence of engagement with and connection to the page(s) cited

- Neglecting to give footnotes for ideas that aren't general knowledge, even if you aren't quoting them directly.
- Copying and pasting something you've previously written, without also giving a footnote indicating where the material originally came from.

Students who are not sure what plagiarism involves are responsible for taking the steps necessary to learn. There are guidelines available online in the "Resources for Success" section of Moodle. Discovered plagiarism results in a grade of 0 for the assignment and in some cases an inability to earn credit for the course.

### **IX. Policy on Disabilities**

Phillips Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in the Seminary programs. For details, see "Disabilities Policies and Procedures" in the Student Handbook. Please contact the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services for consultation.

### **X. Inclusive Language**

It is important to the learning community that participants use inclusive language, and that we as a class think critically about our use of language, particularly in relation to gender, race, ethnicities, cultures, differently-abled bodies, and theological differences.

Please refrain from uncritically using the generic masculine ("mankind," "the brotherhood of man," "If you ask anyone, he will say..." etc.) for humanity in your writing and class participation. (It may be that you find yourself analyzing the history of the generic masculine, which is appropriate, but make your analytical posture clear.)

Be careful with using generic "we" and generic "you." Take the time to designate what perspective you mean. Avoid language which suggests that:

- The default human perspective belongs to someone who *has* a wife, girlfriend, sister, mother, grandmother, etc.; and not to someone who *is* a wife, girlfriend, sister, mother, or grandmother.
- The default human perspective belongs to someone who *knows* persons of color, and not to someone who *is* a person of color.
- The default human perspective belongs to someone who *is trying to accommodate* people with disabilities, and not someone who *is* a person with a disability.
- The default human perspective belongs to someone who *considers* LGBTQI+ persons, and not someone who *is* LGBTQI+.
- The default human perspective belongs to someone who is college-educated, middle class, and from the global north, and not to someone who bears none of these descriptors.

Please make every effort to refrain from uncritically using “lame” to mean “generally bad or silly,” “blind” to mean “self-servingly ignorant,” the terms “savage” or “primitive” generally, and so forth. Please attend to how metaphors and stereotypes affect others, particularly members of historically marginalized groups.

If you choose to use male pronouns to denote the Divine in your own words or to preserve in quoting another’s words, footnote your use with theological rationale, acknowledging your familiarity with the criticisms and giving consideration to what it means for others in your various contexts.

#### **XI. Late Assignment/Extensions Policy**

Normally, turn in assignments on time. Extensions are not automatic and must be justified. Please discuss with both professors as soon as possible any need you foresee for an extension for a particular assignment. Grade deduction for late assignments is a half letter grade a day.

#### **XII. Feedback on Student Work**

During the semester, the professor will give feedback and grades within a week of an assignment being turned in. The final course grade, however, will be submitted to the registrar and communicated to students through the registrar’s office. If unforeseen circumstances make a week turnaround time impossible for the professor, she will notify the class via Moodle’s email feature and Announcements forum.

#### **XIII. Incomplete Policy**

Taking an incomplete for this course is discouraged. According to PTS policy, an incomplete may be granted for extenuating circumstances, but the approval is not automatic and must be justified. Approval must be requested on required forms and granted prior to the announced deadline. Contact Registrar Toni Imbler for more information. **The deadline for requesting an incomplete is Friday, December 2.**

#### **XIV. Changes to syllabus**

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus in service of the learning goals. Any changes made will require no additional clock-hours of work time than the syllabus as presently constructed.

## Course Schedule

**Note on reading:** You may be accustomed to reading assignments that designate a particular section of text. While this schedule does direct you to particular texts, you are asked to read the texts with a particular use in mind. You should expect to read differently depending on the purpose of your reading. For example, we will often begin our inquiry into a book by *skimming*, in order to get some traction on what the book is about, where it should fit in our conversation, and what we need to do in order to get from it what we hope to get from it. This is a very different sort of reading than *close reading*, in which we try to glean specific information from a text; and it is also different from *critical reading*, in which we engage the text in a critical dialogue. Please pay attention to how you are being asked to use the text, and read with that in mind.

### 1. Week beginning 8/24

Please view the lecture, read the syllabus, and post an introduction to the class. Please think about what you hope to get from this class, and consider how you learn best (which may be different from how you most enjoy learning.) Ponder the fact that the best learning happens when people are uncomfortable. Which forms of discomfort have taught you the most? How can others in the class support your learning?

### 2. Week beginning 8/31

Please skim Frederiksen in its entirety and respond to the questions posted in the Moodle forum about the reading. Please view the lecture and complete the Class Learning Goals submission according to the instructions in the lecture. When it is complete, you may post it in the designated Moodle forum, but keep a copy for later submission in your Learning Dossier.

### 3. Week beginning 9/7

Participation progress reports will be sent this week. Please identify a 50-100 page selection of the Frederiksen text that you think has something valuable to teach you, based on your completion last week of the Class Learning Goals exercise. Read it carefully, multiple times if necessary. Please view the video lecture, which will include instructions for writing your posts this week.

### 4. Week beginning 9/14

Please reread the selection of the Frederiksen text you read last week, and consider last week's discussion of the Frederiksen book. This time, read it *critically*. This does not mean that you must bring only negative judgments against it! Rather, it means you should read it as someone who is evaluating whether the claims made in it are sound, whether the argument is coherent, and whether there are areas of disagreement. You may consult outside sources. Having done that, please compose a post on the Frederiksen reading according to the instructions presented in the lecture, and post it in the designated forum. Please also complete the Personal Learning Goals submission for your dossier, according to instructions presented in the video lecture, and post it in the appropriate forum. Do keep a copy for your own records and for final submission in your Dossier.

### 5. Week Beginning 9/21

Please read closely the introduction in *The Christological Controversy*, and skim the remainder of the text. As you read, please note factual information that will help you distinguish the various theologians from each other. (You may consult outside sources as you do this.) Please also note any characteristics of the writing that may make this material more difficult than the Frederiksen text. When you have done this, please view the video lecture, where you will receive instructions for how to complete your posts this week.

### **6. Week Beginning 9/28**

Please closely read two of the authors included in *Christological Controversy*, and get some clarity on their Christological models. You may consult reputable sources, provided you cite them. These are the two models you will write about for your Christological Models submission (see above), which you should send to [sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu](mailto:sarah.morice.brubaker@ptstulsa.edu) sometime during this course week. Please also view the video lecture, as this will help you complete the Christological Models assignment. For your posting requirement: the forums this week will be an opportunity for students to help each other on the Christological Models assignment, through feedback, comments on drafts, mutual struggle to understand dense passages, etc. Please take the opportunity to both give and receive help to/from your colleagues.

### **7. Week beginning 10/5**

Please read all of your colleagues' Christological Models papers, which will be posted in Moodle. This is your only reading assignment this week. You are asked to read them critically, which, again, does not mean reading them for the purpose of offering only negative feedback. Rather, critical reading should entail a dialogue with the paper, remaining open to the possibility that the paper may add to your understanding even as you may have some insights that would make the paper stronger. After you have read all of the papers, please post comments on at least three of them, according to the instructions given in the video lecture. Please also respond to and engage comments made on your paper.

### **[October 10-21: Concentrated Course Weeks]**

### **8. Week beginning 10/26**

This week we will take on challenge of engaging two books simultaneously. The two books build on our prior learning as a class. They are also both about race, so they are able to be brought into dialogue with one another. Please skim both *Racializing Jesus* and *The Black Christ*. (You are responsible for budgeting your time. Since this is a 3 credit hour class, please do not allow yourself to spend more than nine hours of clock-time on this class, total, this week. That includes the skimming, the posting, and the watching of the lecture; so I suggest giving 3 hours of skim time per book and then stopping.) Please also watch the video lecture, which will include instructions for your posting this week.

### **9. Week beginning 11/2**

Our discussion in Week Eight will have helped you to identify a particular area to focus your critical reading on in these two books. This week, our online discussion area will be set up according to

chapter divisions in the two books we are engaging currently. (I hope to set this up as a wiki, but I am still learning that feature on Moodle.) Please add contributions to those areas that correspond to the parts you are focusing on, and read the student contributions in those areas you are not focusing on. Some chapters may have nobody writing about them, which is fine; it gives us helpful information about what our learning community is choosing to focus on. You will receive further instruction on your posts in the video lecture.

### **10. Week beginning 11/9**

This week Dr. Sharon Jacob and I will record a dialogue about the two books we've been working with: one book in biblical studies and one book in systematic theology. Happily enough, these happen to be our disciplines. Please post about the video lecture/dialogue in the designated conversation. Please also submit your Christological Questions in the designated forum; you will receive instructions in the video lecture.

### **11. Week beginning 11/16, excluding 11/23-11/29, and concluding on 11/30**

Stephen Prothero's *American Jesus* is a book that many students have found translates well to congregational contexts. It also integrates many of the themes we will have worked with all semester. Whether you are in a congregational context or not, please begin reading Stephen Prothero's *American Jesus* with an eye to *teaching* this text to a particular group. This is a different kind of reading than the reading you've been doing so far, but will draw upon the skills you've practiced: skimming, identifying areas for further attention, engaging critically, summarizing, evaluating, and synthesizing. Your prompt for the discussion forum post will draw on this reading, and will also prepare you for your Christological Proposal (which will be due in Week 12). Instructions for posting will be given in the video lecture.

### **12. Week beginning 11/30**

Please finish reading whatever parts of *American Jesus* you need to complete in order to complete your Christological Proposal. For your Christological Proposal, please briefly (in 300-600 words total):

- Give an overview of a Christology you are beginning to claim;
- Give a theological rationale for that Christological proposal;
- Put your proposal in historical context and in your own cultural context;
- Consider its ethical implications;
- Identify what you still need to learn to flesh your proposal out further, and speculate about how you might learn those things;
- Refer to and properly cite the readings.

That will be your main post for this week. Please also read other students' proposals and comment on at least three of them. There will be no other readings this week.

**Wrap-up mini-session, 12/7-12/9:** I will post a brief video lecture with final thoughts and thanks. Dossiers are due December 16.