

Introduction to Christian Theology

REL 262 / 4 Credits / Northwestern College / Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Michael Andres, andres@nwcsiowa.edu

Office/Hours: VPH115; Mon, Tue, Fri 3:30-5:00pm; ext. 7079

Class Time: MWF 1:00-2:00 (02); 2:10-3:10 pm (03) **Class Location:** VPH119

Course Description:

This course is a study of the major concepts of Christian theology and their interrelationships. We will explore how best to form theological beliefs and consider the doctrines of Scripture, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, humanity, salvation, sanctification, the church, and the last things.

Course Objectives:

We seek to become a believing community of depth, possessing a reflective, sensitive, and passionate faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- Students will learn how to critically engage our culture as a Christian.
- Students will grasp the basic doctrines of historic, evangelical, and Reformed theology, while learning and interacting with other theological traditions, including the Apostles' Creed and Heidelberg Catechism.
- Students will appreciate the role of biblical authority in Christian theology.
- Students will think more critically, consistently, and biblically about God, ourselves, the world, and the relations between these.
- Students will learn how to dialogue intelligently, openly, and sensitively about our faith to others, some of whom may not agree with our view.
- Students will consider how Christian theology ought to affect one's life, draw one closer to the living God, and reveal one's calling as an agent of redemption and shalom.

Primary Texts:

- Bible (modern translation, e.g. NASB, NIV, NRSV, etc. [not paraphrase, e.g. New Living]; bring to every class period).
- Bettenson, Henry and Maunder, Chris, *Documents of the Christian Church, Third Edition* (Oxford Univ Press, 1999).
- Boyd, Greg, and Eddy, Paul, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology, Second Edition* (Baker, 2009).
- Hesselink, I. John, ed., *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (CRC Pub., 1988).
- McGrath, Alister, *Theology: The Basics, Second Edition* (Blackwell, 2008).

Course Requirements:

- *Class attendance/participation:* Participation highly encouraged. Attendance is mandatory; material covered in class often is not found in readings. After *three* unexcused absences, students will be graded down one-half letter grade for every subsequent unexcused absence.

- Students may not use laptop computers in class. You may transfer written notes to your computer later. Please turn cell phones completely off before class begins (not on 'vibrate').
- *Readings*: Reading should be completed *before* class time listed. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of forthcoming reading assignments given in syllabus.
 - *Council Enactment*: See details below.
 - *Quizzes*: Eight quizzes will cover material from McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* and Boyd/Eddy, *Across the Spectrum*. Top *seven* quiz scores count towards final grade. Quizzes questions are found at the end of syllabus. Quizzes can only be rescheduled with *advance* permission of instructor.
 - *Written Project*: One theological film analysis (choices below) is required.
 - *Exams*: There will be two sectional exams and one comprehensive final exam.

Course Assessment:

- Council Enactment (4%) = 10 points
- Quizzes (28%) = 70 points / 10 points each
- Exams (60%) = 150 points / 50 points each
- Film Analysis (8%) = 20 points

Guidelines for Theological Enactment:

Each student has the unique opportunity to participate in a theological council! You will be appointed to one of seven councils that take their names from significant historic councils in the life of the church. Each council will have between 4-6 members.

Your council will do one council enactment during regular class time. Your group is required to research, organize, and perform a 10-15 minute enactment of your particular council (e.g. Council of Nicea). All members must participate. The enactment should give accurate expression of the main historical events, theological issue(s), and key participants, which took place at the actual council. *Focus mostly on the main issue of the council* (that is, the issue stated in parenthesis on syllabus, though you may mention other issues). Have fun with this and be creative! You may do the enactment as straight historical drama, or as a game show, or a satire, or as a western, or as science fiction, or as a home movie, or whatever you can cook up! (Have fun if you like, but do not mock or demean.) Just make sure the main historical and theological issues come across clearly. You should be prepared to commence the enactment at the very beginning of given class date (right at 1:00 or 2:10 pm). Do not exceed fifteen minutes. If you use a video, bring your own CD/disc, do not log on to college account. *A one page outline of relevant information should be provided to entire class, with bibliography on back.*

The councils are (name, main issue): International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Scripture); Council of Nicea (Trinity); Council of Chalcedon (Christ); Synod of Dort (Election); Ninety-Five Theses (Justification); Council of Trent (Justification / Sanctification); and Vatican II (Church / *Lumen Gentium*).

Criteria for grading the enactments can be viewed on the [Council Enactment Evaluation Form](#) (filled out by professor).

Guidelines for Film Analysis (Due April 23):

Students are required to produce one theological 1200 word film analysis; formatting guidelines

can be found at [Writing and Submission Guidelines](#). Students may choose from *one* of four given contemporary films.

- (i) In one or two paragraphs, give a brief summary of the plot of the film and its primary theme or main point (approximately 10% of total essay).
- (ii) Identify any Christian or theological themes, aspects, or symbolism found in the film. Analyze the film and determine its (explicit or implicit) view of God, humanity, savior/Christ, revelation, evil, salvation, creation, and any other relevant theological doctrines (approx. 60% of total essay). You need not cover *every* doctrine; most films interact with only one, two, or maybe three theological areas or doctrines, if at all.
- (iii) Finally, evaluate the theological view(s) espoused by the film and give an *argument* – with clearly specified *reasons!* – for your conclusion (approx. 30% of essay). Think with a Christian mind (e.g. utilize various sources for theology to support your evaluation). For further clarification on writing a good theological film analysis, read chapter found as a handout on the course My Northwestern page by Robert Johnston, "Responding to Movies Theologically" (*Reel Spirituality*, ch 8).

This analysis should be original to you; do not be tempted to plagiarize! Do not consult other students for analysis or evaluation of film. Be very discerning when using the internet as a resource; ideas found on the net are not necessarily correct or relevant to a theological film analysis. If consulted, the internet should be used *minimally* as a source and any ideas (not only phrases) borrowed should be carefully footnoted! You may choose to analyze *one* of the following four films:

Babbette's Feast; The Green Mile; Twelve Monkeys; Contact

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and view the film! No other films may be substituted. Students will be evaluated according to the comprehension, analysis, and quality demonstrated in their analyses. Be sure to give a clearly elucidated argument for your interpretation of the film. For further elaboration of grading criteria, see [Grading Guidelines](#).

Final Exam Schedule:

- MWF, 1:00-2:00 Class – Thursday, May 6, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
- MWF, 2:10-3:10 Class – Thursday, May 6, 10:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Make any travel or plane reservations early; professor does not have the authority to reschedule the final exam for any student.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Northwestern College is a Christian academic community committed to integrity and honesty in all intellectual and academic matters. Behavior that violates academic integrity can take a variety of forms including, but not limited to, cheating on tests, quizzes, papers, and projects; plagiarism using unauthorized material; willful misrepresentation of evidence and arguments. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words or ideas, with the intent of deceiving the reader concerning the origin of the words, ideas, or images (excerpts from *NWC Student Handbook*, 11).

Course Assistance:

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern College will provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact both their instructor and the college disability service provider to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

I have an open door policy. Please come by my office, preferably at office hours, if you have any questions or are having any problems with the reading, lectures, note taking, written project, etc. Or come by for a cup of tea and chat about life. For further assistance in academic matters help is available through Tom Truesdell at Academic Support (VPH 125B). Tutors are available.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Course Schedule:

Date	Subject	Reading
	INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY	
Jan 13	Introduction	
Jan 15	What is theology?	B (Bible): Prov 14:6; 18:15; 1Tim 4:16; 2Tim 2:15; Acts 17:11; Phil 1:9-10; Eph 4:15; McGrath: vii-x.
	I BELIEVE...	
Jan 18	<i>Theological Method</i> How can we know God?	B: Rom 12:1-2; 1Cor 2:6-16; 2Cor 10:5; McGrath: xi-xxv; Quiz #1 (quiz)

[questions below](#))

Tradition

Jan 20 **What have Christians believed throughout history?: Early Church and Medieval Era** (Video Series: 1-2)

Bettenson:1-29, 90-91; 97-106, 146-149; ECRC (Ecumenical Creeds & Reformed Confessions):7-8

Jan 22 **What have Christians believed throughout history?: Reformation & Post-Reformation Era** (Video Series: 3-4)

Bettenson:202-238; 275-298; 319-324

Jan 25 **What have Christians believed throughout history?: Modern Era** (Video Series: 6)

Reserved Reading: McGrath, *Christian Theology*, "The Modern Period" [handout]; [Quiz #2](#)

Experience and Culture

Jan 27 **How did modernity shape theology?**

Bettenson:345-397; Boyd/Eddy: Online [Appendix](#), Issue 5

Jan 29 **How should postmodernity shape theology?**

Boyd/Eddy: Online [Appendix](#), Issue 1

Reason and Nature

Feb 1 **Do nature and/or reason reveal God?**

Debate!; B: Ps 19; Rom 1:18-32; ECRC:79, 133-134; Bettenson:5-7,151-156, 345-349; McGrath:1-10.

Feb 3 **Do science and theology conflict?**

McGrath:51-56; Boyd/Eddy:70-96

Scripture

Feb 5 **Are the words of Scripture the words of God?**

B:Jn 1:1-18; 2Tim 3:14-17; Heb 1:1-2; 2Pet 1:12-21; ECRC:18, 79-82, 136; Bettenson:29-31; Boyd/Eddy:15-31

Feb 8 **How accurately does Scripture reveal God's words?**

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy; International Council on Biblical Inerrancy Enactment (Scripture).

**I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,
CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH...**

Theology Proper

Feb 10 **How is the Creator related to creation?**

B:Ps 139; Rom11:33-34; Eph 1; 1Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17; Heb 1:10-12; ECRC:78; McGrath:39-60; [Quiz #3](#)

Feb 12	What is the "Trinity"?	B: Dt 6:4; Mat 3:16-17; 28:16-20; Heb 1:5-14; Acts 5:3-4; ECRC: 7-10, 21, 83-86; Bettenson: 27-29, 42-48; McGrath: 102-122; Boyd/Eddy: Online Appendix , Issue 2; Council of Nicea Enactment (Trinity) .
Feb 15	Is God loving and good? Does God need anything?	B: Ex 3; Lev 19:2; Isa 6:3; Ps 136; Rom 11:33-36; McGrath: 20-33
Feb 17	Does God know everything?	B: 1Chron 29:11-12; Is 14:24-27; Lk 1:37; Eph 1; ECRC: 22-23, 88-90; Boyd/Eddy: 47-69; "Omniscience" a sermon by Charles Spurgeon
Feb 19	Does God exercise power over everything?	B: Gen 3; 45:1-8; Job 1; Acts 2:24-28; Rom 8:18; 9:19-24; 2Cor 4:17; ECRC: 15; McGrath: 33-37; Boyd/Eddy: 32-46
Feb 22	Exam #1 I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S ONLY SON, OUR LORD... <i>Anthropology/Humanity</i> What is the purpose of humanity?	Study Guide Exam 1
Feb 24	<i>Anthropology/Humanity</i> What is the purpose of humanity?	B: Gen 1-2; Jas 3:9; ECRC: 15, 91, 133; Optional - Boyd/Eddy: 97-110
Feb 26	How sinful are human beings?	B: Gen 3; Gal 5:16-21; Eph 2:1-3; Rom 3:1-18, 23; ECRC: 14-16, 91-93, 123, 133; Bettenson: 57-67
Mar 1	How sinful are human beings?	
Mar 3	<i>Christology</i> Who is Jesus Christ?	B: 1Tim 2:5-6; Col 1:15-20; Phil 2:5-11; Luke 9:18-22; ECRC: 7-10, 17-18, 94-96; Bettenson: 38-56; McGrath: 61-80; Quiz #4
Mar 5	Is Christ fully human and fully divine?	B: Mat 28; Lk 24:13-35; Jn 20-21; Boyd/Eddy: 111-123; Chalcedonian Definition ; Council of Chalcedon Enactment (Christ) .

Spring Break – March 6-15

**I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, WHO WAS
CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED...HE
ROSE AGAIN**

Mar 17 **How does Jesus rescue us?**

Mar 19 **Why did Jesus die?**

B: Heb 2:17; Rom 3:24-25; Jn 3:16;
Rev 19:16; **ECRC:**7-10, 27-33, 130;
Bettenson:32-37, 152-154;
Boyd/Eddy:124-144; **McGrath:** 81-
96; [Quiz #5](#)

Mar 22 **Why did Jesus rise from the dead?**

B:Luke 24:1-12; 1Cor 15:3-8

Mar 24 **Day of Learning in Community**

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT...

Pneumatology

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Mar 26

B:Jn 14:15-27; 15; 1Cor 2:6-16;
3:16-17; 12:7-11; 2Cor 3:18; Rom 8;
Gal 2:20; Eph 2; **ECRC:**34, 88;
McGrath:106-111; **Optional -**
Boyd/Eddy:235-248

I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS...

Soteriology

**On what basis did God choose those who will
be saved?**

Mar 29

B:Jn 6:44; Rom 8-9; Eph 1-2;
ECRC:35, 94, 123-132;
Bettenson:319-323, 282;
Boyd/Eddy:145-160; [Quiz #6](#)

Mar 31 **What is salvation? I**

B:Rom 8; **ECRC:**19-23, 26, 28, 53-
54, 99-100, 123-145; **McGrath:**1-
19; 96-100; Synod of Dort
Enactment (Election).

Apr 2 **What is salvation? II**

Bettenson:202-237, 272-285;
Boyd/Eddy:183-196; Ninety-Five
Theses Enactment (Justification).

Easter Break – April 3-5

Apr 7 **What is salvation? III**

Apr 9 [Exam #2](#)

[Study Guide Exam 2](#)

Sanctification

Apr 12	How should we live the Christian life?	<u>Council of Trent Enactment (Justification/Sanctification)</u>
Apr 14	What is the “baptism of the Spirit”?	B: Mt 16:24; Rom 6-8; 12; Phil 4:6-7; Ps 1; Rom 7; 1Cor 3:1-3; Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16; 24:49; Jn 1:33; Acts 1:5, 8; 11:16; 1Cor 12:13; ECRC: 40, 53-54, 101-102, 140-141; Boyd/Eddy: 146-164, Online Appendix , Issues 7-8.
	I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS...	
	<i>Ecclesiology</i> What is the Church?	
Apr 16		B: Eph 3-4; 1Cor 11-14; 1Tim 3; ECRC: 7, 35, 106-111; Bettenson: 68-89, 359-364; McGrath: 123-143; <u>Vatican II Council Enactment (Church / <i>Lumen Gentium</i>)</u> .
Apr 19	Should babies be baptized?	ECRC: 41-44, 111-114, 126; McGrath: 144-158; Boyd/Eddy: 214-225; Quiz #7
Apr 21	What does communion mean?	B: Lk 22:7-23; Jn 6:53-55; 1Cor10:14-22; 11:17-34; ECRC: 45-50; 114-117; Bettenson: 81-84, 162-166; McGrath: 158-164; Boyd/Eddy: 226-234
Apr 23	Special Speaker: Father Doug Klein, “Roman Catholic Theology” I BELIEVE HE WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD... I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.	Film Analysis Due (at class time)
	<i>Eschatology</i> What will be the sequence of events associated with the millennium?	
Apr 26		B: Dan 7, 9; Mt 25; 1Thes 4; Rev 20; ECRC: 7, 37, 118-120; McGrath: 177-179; Boyd/Eddy: 261-279; Online Appendix , Issue 10-12; Quiz #8
Apr 28	What are heaven and hell like?	B: Mt 25:41, 46; Mk 9:43, 48; 1Cor 15; Rev 14:9-11; 21-22; Boyd/Eddy: 254-264
Apr 30	What are heaven and hell like?	McGrath: 280-292
May 6	Final Exam	Study Guide Final Exam

Quiz Questions (one question will be chosen by instructor):

Quiz #1 (McGrath, xi-xxv)

1. Name the five periods of Christian history.
2. Recite the Apostles' Creed.
3. Name the three fundamental sources of Christian theology.

Quiz #2 (McGrath, "The Modern Period", in 'handouts' section of My Northwestern)

Questions #1-4 from end of "The Modern Period"

Quiz #3 (McGrath, 39-60)

1. How is creation *ex nihilo* different from dualism?
2. Explain the three models of God as Creator.
3. Articulate the view of natural theology held by Aquinas, Calvin, and Barth.

Quiz #4 (McGrath, 61-80)

1. Choose three of the five biblical titles for Jesus Christ mentioned by McGrath. What does the Bible mean by each of these titles?
2. What are the three functional statements about Jesus that give clues as to his identity?
3. What are three inadequate approaches to explaining the humanity and divinity of Christ and how is the Chalcedonian Definition different from these inadequate approaches?

Quiz #5 (McGrath, 81-96)

Questions from end of chapter 5. You will not be allowed view the Augustine text while taking the quiz. Make sure on question #1 that, when asked to "refresh your memory," you list the three major approaches to the meaning of the cross (then explain which fits best with Augustine's text).

Quiz #6 (Boyd/Eddy, 132-145)

1. Explain the Calvinist TULIP.
2. Explain the four Arminian motifs.

Quiz #7 (Boyd/Eddy, 201-211)

1. Describe and give arguments for believer's baptism.
2. Describe and give arguments for paedobaptism.

Quiz #8 (Boyd/Eddy, 236-253)

1. Describe and give arguments for premillennialism.
2. Describe and give arguments for postmillennialism.
3. Describe and give arguments for amillennialism.