

Fall 2011

TH2100 – INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

<u>Instructors</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>	<u>Class Times</u>
<u>Professor</u> Mark Lewis Taylor	by appointment	<u>Lectures:</u> Tu 8:30-9:20am Th 8:30-9:20am
<u>Preceptors</u>		<u>Precepts:</u>
Sarah Stewart-Kroeker Sigurd Baark David Congdon	by appointment by appointment	TBA

That is why we have first had to set Jesus against man and his cosmos as the poor man who if He blessed and befriended any, blessed and befriended the poor and not the rich, the incomparable revolutionary who laid the axe at the root of the trees,...

But again, we do not really know Jesus (the Jesus of the New Testament) if we do not know Him as this poor man, as this (if we may risk the dangerous word) partisan of the poor, and finally as this revolutionary.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/2:179-80*

Are you ready to organize a movement? If your just confession of Christ dead and resurrected for us such as it is witnessed in Holy Scripture includes this and expresses it, then your confession is a good and precious one that will bear its fruits; if it does not include this and does not express it, such confession is no good despite its justness; on the contrary, it is a dead, cheap confession that strains off the midge and gulps down the camel just like the Pharisees of Jesus' times.

Karl Barth, to George Casalis¹

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a one-semester introduction to systematic theology. Because the course occurs within students' first year of their Masters degree program, and in the first semester of that year (!), I have organized the course to be more "an introduction to *the study of* systematic theology," and less a survey of the whole of systematic theology.

¹ George Casalis, "Théologie et socialisme: L'exemple de Karl Barth," in *Etudes théologiques et religieuses* 49, no. 1 (1974), 158.

Thus I do not take up what is a well-known format for teaching this Systematic Theology, i.e. journeying through each of the major *loci* or doctrines of traditional Christian theology, and trying to introduce them all (or, as many of them as possible). I will give introductory summary attention, in lectures, to the *loci* in the week on “Creed and Empire,” and in the two weeks devoted to Calvin’s *Institutes*.

Instead, in this course, as the organizational “Agenda” of the course shows, I am introducing course members to several different senses of the term, “systematic,” in theology. Then, throughout, I am limiting the scope of the course, for the most part, to two issues. The first is a cultural-political issue pertinent to the entire history of the church and into the present – *empire and the imperial*. (Recall, “the imperial” entails not just a national and international politics, but has also spheres that are inter-personal, psychological and domestic.) The second issue is a key, if not the key, area of doctrine in Christian theology, *Christology*.

The course will incorporate some necessary learning (and memorization) of key traits of the major ecumenical councils, and of the key theological moves made by John Calvin, who will remain the single most read theologian of this course (nearly all within a two-week period). But don’t be deceived, the course will equip you to read Calvin within a matrix that I propose to be broad, diverse and liberating.

The conceptual structure for the ten weeks of the course unfolds as follows, under three parts, “Ancient,” “Pre-Modern,” “Modernity/Coloniality.” See, again, the Agenda below for the dates and the readings assigned within this outline.

ANCIENT

1. Gospel Ideals and Visions – What’s It All About?
2. Systematics I – Narratives and Christian Movements

PRE-MODERN

3. Systematics II – Creed and Empire
4. Systematics III – Summa and Christendom

MODERNITY/COLONIALITY

5. Systematics IV – *Institutes* & Renaissance/Reformation
6. *Institutes* & Renaissance/Reformation (continued)
7. Systematics V – Liberal Theology and Enlightenment
8. Systematics VI – Evangelical Theology and U.S. Modern Subject
9. Systematics VII – Reconciliation and Theologies of Difference
10. Systematics VIII – Postcolonial Theologies and Liberation

ON PROMOTING THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION & DIALOGUE

Since one of the chief purposes of the course is to promote the capacity of its members to engage in theological reflection, students may be challenged by the diverse readings assigned. You are free to disagree with what you read, as do the instructors for this course, in different respects. Nevertheless, do give patient attention even to those texts. You may also be challenged in your discussion groups by

instructors and by one another, both because your views vary from one another's and because you need to challenge one another to provide good arguments for your positions. All views of all participants are to be treated with openness and respect.

In the spirit of such a class with these values, I call your attention especially to the following important points:

- (1) *Inclusive language* with respect to human beings is expected, and inclusive language in respect to God is encouraged.
- (2) Be aware that some *offensive terms* have a history of abuse toward groups who traditionally have occupied "minoritized" positions in official Western settings. These terms just should not be used – even for allegedly "intellectual" or supposedly "neutral" purposes. (Thus, the "n--- word" for people of color or anyone else, or the "b---- word" for women or anyone else, and other similar words, are to be avoided. They "perform" abuse whatever may be your intentions. They just should not happen.)
- (3) Your instructors are committed to doing everything they can to respond to, and interact creatively with, *class members with special needs*. Usually the registrar and/or the Dean of Students will be in touch with instructional staff about these matters.
- (4) Our environment for reflection is not promoted if attendees in lectures surf *the internet*, or engage in checking email and/or facebooking. I have not yet decided, like many other colleagues I know, to disallow all computers from the lecture hall, so please honor my request here that you use your computers in class only to take and process your notes on the lectures. Thank you! *Mark Taylor*.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular class attendance, at lectures and precepts [10 percent of the final course grade, but with absences, everything else falls apart!]
2. Participation in all assigned precepts, with an agreement to serve once as the "Initial Respondent" to the focus question of the week (to be distributed). I am going to try to set up Blackboard groups for each precept, by the end of the second week. [Precept work is 15 percent of the final course grade].
3. Submission by Tuesday, Nov. 22, right before Thanksgiving break of your *Ecumenical Councils Template*. The *Template* will be distributed at the beginning of the second week of the class, and help you organize and retain key points relative to the seven ecumenical councils: matters of historical context, key content, and theological significance. [20 percent of the final course grade]

4. Submission of a completed *Theological Vocabulary List* on the day of the final exam in December. This vocabulary list will be distributed to you just prior to the Fall Reading Period break, Oct. 20, and its terms will be basic ones used in the history of Christian theology, from the early readings to the present. [25 percent of the final course grade]
5. *Final Exam*, to be written at the final exam period that will be scheduled by the Office of the registrar for the week of December 12, 2011. This exam, a three-hour exam, will have two parts. Part I will be focused on Calvin's theology, giving you a choice of essay questions enabling you to write on some aspect of his theology *and* to develop your critical perspective on his work. Part II will be focused on key issues in modern/contemporary theologies, as introduced in the latter part of the course, beginning with the week of Nov. 15-18. A study guide for both parts of this final exam will be provided by the instructors, about three weeks before the final. [30 percent of the final course grade]

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

As goals for this course, the following five statements point to specific aims of theological reflection that we hope course members will begin to embrace in this course and then throughout their theological education beyond this place. As outcomes, the five statements are worded so that they also point to the actual achievements we hope to see in students by end of term, and progress toward which we will be evaluating. Below, in each statement, the underscored phrase names the kind of theological reflection or "goal" areas; the phrases following name the specific achievements we will look for at end of course, or the "outcomes."

1. Gospel-Doctrine Interplay. A lively and critical sensibility for how the visions and values of the gospel interplay with doctrines, these latter understood as the key elaborations by theologians of what Christians believe, teach and confess.
2. Historical Sense in Theology. A historical sense of what "systematic theology" is, and of the various forms it has taken by different Christian communities.
3. Contemporary Difference(s). A contemporary astuteness about how differently systematic theology is undertaken in various communities, and especially when undertaken by those long excluded from, or repressed by, mainstream ("Eurocentered/male-stream") Christian theological traditions.
4. Calvin's Theology. A working and growing understanding of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as it has informed key aspects of both a general "Reformed tradition," and also important cultural politics of U.S. religious and cultural life.
5. Creedal Sense. An ability to identify the historical and theological crises and responses at work in the important, first seven "ecumenical councils" of the church.

TEXTS

Below are listed the texts that have been ordered and are available in the seminary's Cokesbury Store. The ones with an asterisk are the ones you will most probably want to purchase and from which the most reading is included. Beyond those marked with an asterisk, I suggest you do not make any purchases until after the first class when I will make some comment on the texts.

Additional essays, selected from various sources, are also assigned. Full citations for these are given in the agenda under the week for which they are assigned. Available through E-reserve..

*CALVIN, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Editors John T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles. Westminster John Knox Press, 1960.

DAVIS, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. Liturgical Press, 1983.

FABELLA, Virginia, and SUGIRTHARAJAH, R. *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. Orbis Books, 2000/2003.

*HARVEY, Van. *A Handbook of Theological Terms*. Touchstone, 1997.

HORSLEY, Richard A. *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant and the Hope of the Poor*. Fortress Press, 2011.

HODGSON, Peter C. and KING, Robert. *Christian Theology: An Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks*. Fortress Press, 1985.

*KWOK, Pui-lan. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. WJK Press, 2005.
(Dr. Pui-lan Kwok is this year's President of the American Academy of Religion)

*MILES, Margaret R. *The Word Made Flesh: A History of Christian Thought*. Blackwell Publishers, 2005.

AGENDA
A N C I E N T

SEPT 20, 22, 23

1. GOSPEL IDEALS AND VISIONS – WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?

Themes (92 total reading pages)

- Hellenistic milieu’s poly-religiosity
- Historical matrices of pre-systematic imagery
- The Jesus movement – a theology?
- Gospel & Doctrinal Traditions

Traditions

Mark Lewis Taylor, “Christian Theological Systems,” in *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*. Ed. Jonathan Z. Smith, William Scott Green, with the American Academy of Religion. New York: HarperCollins, 1995, pages 265-67.

Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor*. Fortress Press, 2011, pages 1-15, 179-204.

Miles, “Prelude: Flesh and Word,” pages 1-9

“Christians in the Roman Empire,” pages 10-27.

Gospel Undercurrents

Jon Sobrino, “The Resurrection of One Crucified: Hope and a Way of Living,” in Sobrino, *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays*. Orbis Books, 2008, pages 99-108.

R. S. Sugirtharajah, “Jesus in Saffron Robes: The ‘Other’ Jesus Whom Recent Biographers Forget,” in Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations*. Orbis Books, 1998, 112-19.

James H. Cone, “The Content of Black Theology,” in Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Fortieth anniversary edition. Orbis Books, 1986, pages 1-21.

SEPT 27, 29, 30

**2. SYSTEMATICS I:
NARRATIVES AND CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT(S)**

Themes (116 pp)

- Images/icons/texts
- Rules/canons/authority
- Interpretation & authority of scripture

Traditions

Miles, "The First Theologians," pages 28-47.

"Constructing Christian Churches" [authority and heresy], 47-64.

Peter C. Hodgson and Edward Farley, "Scripture and Tradition," in Hodgson and King, *Christian Theology*, 61-87.

Calvin, "The Knowledge of God the Creator. . . ," pages 43-58, and "Scripture is Needed, . . .," pages 69-81, 94-96 in the John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 volumes. Westminster John Knox Press.

Gospel Undercurrents

Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Reading with Yin Yang Eyes: Negotiating the Ideological Dilemma of a Chinese American Biblical Hermeneutics," *What Is Asian-American Biblical Hermeneutics? Reading the New Testament*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008, pages 18-33.

Regina J. Weems, "Reading *Her* Way through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible," in Cain Hope Felder, editor. *Stony the Road We Trod: African-American Biblical Interpretation*. Fortress Press, 1991, pages 57-77.

PRE - MODERNITY

OCT 4, 6, 7

3. SYSTEMATICS II: CREED AND EMPIRE

Themes (115 pp)

- Conciliar and imperial power
- Bishops and emperors
- The Seven Councils & Theology

Traditions

Leo Donald Davis, "Introduction: The Roman World," in Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (321-787)*, pages 9-30.

Athanasius, "Truly Human, Truly God" (from *Orations against the Arians*. Fragment), in *Readings in Christian Theology*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson & Robert H. King. Fortress Press, 1985. Pages 205-08. (see E-reserves)

Miles, "Inclusions and Exclusions: The Fourth Century," 65-76, 89-114.

Recommended:

"The Creed of Nicaea (325)," "The Constantinopolitan Creed" (381) and "The Definition of Chalcedon (425)" in John Leith, editor, *The Creeds of the Church: A Reader of Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Third edition. Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), pages 28-36.

Gospel Undercurrents

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Oratory of Euphemia and the Ekklesia of Wo/men, in *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*. Crossroad, 1994, pages 3-31.

Joerg Rieger, "Resisting and Reframing Coequality: Christology and the Creeds," in Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 69-99.

OCT 11, 13, 14

4. SYSTEMATICS III: SUMMAE & CHRISTENDOM

Themes (108 pp.)

- On summas and systems
- Thomas Aquinas' *Summa*
- Christendom, Race and Coloniality

Traditions

Miles, "Fleshing Out the Word: Medieval Christianity East and West," 115-23.

"Early Scholasticism" [Anselm] 140-46.

"Incarnation and Hierarchy in the Medieval West" [Thomas Aquinas], 147-8, 164-74.

Mark D. Jordan, "Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)," in *Empire and the Christian Tradition*, 153-66.

Gospel Undercurrents

"Resisting and Reframing the God-Human: Christology and Empire in the Middle Ages," in Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 119-47.

Miles, "Interlude," 184-5.

"The Suffering Body of Christ" [The Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth centuries: John Wyclif, John Hus, Erasmus, Luther, radical reformers], 224-26, 230-38, 240-56.

MODERNITY / COLONIALITY

OCT 18, 20, 21

5. SYSTEMATICS IV:

INSTITUTES & RENAISSANCE/REFORMATION

Themes (121 pp.)

- Renaissance and Reformation (“magisterial” and “radical”)
- System and Structure in Reformed Theology
- Calvin’s *Institutes*

Traditions

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

116-128 (“How God is to be Distinguished...”);

255-281 (“Man Has Now Been Deprived...” through paragraph 21)

241-255 (“The Knowledge of God the Redeemer...”)

464-474 (“Christ Had to Become Man...”)

474-481 (“Christ Assumed...”)

503-528 (“How Christ Has Fulfilled...”)

Miles, “Calvin’s Theology,” 268-82

Gospel undercurrents

Donald H. Compier, “Jean Calvin (1509-1564),” in *Empire and the Christian Tradition*
Eds. Kwok, Pui-lan, Compier, Donald H., and Rieger, Jeorg. Fortress Press, 2007,
Pages, 215-28.

NOV 1, 3, 4

6. *INSTITUTES & RENAISSANCE/REFORMATION (CONTINUED)*

Themes (125 pp.)

- John Calvin's Geneva & Contemporary Christian Ethics
- Calvin's *Institutes* (continued)

Traditions

Calvin, *Institutes*.

- 494-503 ("The Prophetic Office, Kingship and Priesthood...")
- 528-534 ("Christ...and Salvation for Us,")
- 537-542 ("The Way We Receive the Grace of Christ...the Spirit,")
- 542-551 ("Faith: Its Definition...and Its Properties...")
- 689-701 ("The Sum of the Christian Life...")
- 701-712 ("Bearing the Cross...")
- 712-719 ("Meditation on the Future Life")
- 725-729 ("Justification by Faith...")
- 743-746 ("Righteousness by faith...and by works,")
- 920-932 ("Eternal Election,...")
- 947-964 ("Refutation of the False Accusations. . .")

Gospel Undercurrents

Elsa Tamez, "Perspectives on Justification by Faith from Latin America," in Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace: Justification by Faith from a Latin American Perspective*. Abingdon Press, 1993, pages 19-36.

Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "John Wesley (1703-1791)" in *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians*, eds. Kwok, Pui-lan, Compier, Donald H., and Rieger, Joerg. Fortress Press, 2009, pages 257-70.

NOV 8, 10, 11 (AAR weekend)

**7. SYSTEMATICS V:
LIBERAL THEOLOGY AND ENLIGHTENMENT**

Themes (98 pp)

- Modernity/Coloniality and Liberal Theology
- Types of Christian Theology

Traditions

Miles, “Prologue,” and “Descartes and the Method of Doubt,” 325-32

“Christianity in Seventeenth Century France” [Freethinkers, Jansenists, Pascal], 332-39.

“Canada and the Americas,” 352-58.

- ◆ David Tracy, “Five Basic Models in Contemporary Theology,” in Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*. University of Chicago, 1996 (1975 original, Crossroad Pub.), pages 22-34.

Gospel Undercurrents

Gerard Winstanley, “A Declaration to the Powers of England (The True Levellers’ Standard Advanced),” in *The Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*. A two volume set. Eds. Thomas N. Corn, Ann Hughes and David Lowenstein. Oxford University Press, 2009, pages 4-20, and 31-9.

Joerg Rieger, “Reframing Prophet, Priest and King: Christology and Later Colonialism,” in Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 197-225.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Theology: A Critical Reflection,” in Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*. 15th anniversary edition. Orbis Books, 1988, pages 1-12.

NOV 15, 17, 18

**8. SYSTEMATICS VI:
EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY & THE U.S. MODERN SUBJECT**

Themes (134)

- Fundamentalist/Modernism controversy
- Princeton Realism and Reformed Orthodoxy
- Today's Postconservative Evangelicalism & the Christian Right

Traditions

Gary Dorrien, "Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?," "Antimodernist Modernizers," and "Toward Postconservative Evangelicalism: Dialogues in Search of a Generous Orthodoxy," in Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, pages 1-48, 185-209.

Millard Erickson, "Postmodernity and Theology," in *Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, 2nd edition. Baker Book House, 2008, pp. 31-9.

Gospel Undercurrents (here, only one of the two essays, below, is required)

Nicola Hoggard Creegan and Christine D. Pohl, "Where are the Good Women: Revising the Road Maps for a Changing Terrain," and "Continuing the Theological Dialogue: Finding a Place for Eve," in *Living on the Boundaries: Evangelical Women, Feminism and the Theological Academy*. InterVarsity Press, 2005, pages 9-30.

Edward Gilbreath, "Prologue," and "Reconciliation Blues," *Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity*. InterVarsity Press, 2006, pages 9-41.

**Thanksgiving/Fall Festivals Break
(no classes Nov. 22, 24, 25)**

NOV 29, DEC 1, 2

**9. SYSTEMATICS VII:
THEOLOGIES OF DIFFERENCE & RECONCILIATION**

Themes (129 pp)

- Postmodern and poststructuralist turns
- Theologies of reconciliation, love, otherness, difference, relationality

Traditions

Miles, "Postlude: The Word Made Flesh," pages 390-91.

Karl Barth, "The Righteousness of God," *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans Edwyn C. Hoskyns. Oxford University Press, 1968. Original 1918, pages 77-114.

Gospel Undercurrents

Kwok Pui-lan, "Beyond Pluralism: Toward a Postcolonial Theology of Religious Difference," in Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, pages 186-208.

Laurel Schneider, "Divine Multiplicity. . .", and ". . .In a world of difference," in Schneider, *Beyond Monotheism: A Theology of Multiplicity*. Routledge, 2008, pages 153-81.

Mayra Rivera, "Transcendence in the Flesh of the Other," in Rivera, *Touch of Transcendence*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, pages 83-97.

M. Shawn Copeland, "Eucharist, Racism and Black Bodies," in *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being*. Fortress Press, 2010, pages 102-28.

DEC 6, 8, 9

**SYSTEMATICS VIII:
LIBERATION & POSTCOLONIAL THEOLOGIES**

Themes (79pp)

- The critiques of modernity/coloniality & Enlightenment
- 20th century liberation theologies

Traditions

Kwok Pui-lan, “Engendering Christ: Who Do You Say that I Am?” in *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, pages 168-85.

Wonhee Anne Joh, “Feminist, Postcolonial Identity: Toward *Jeong*,” and “The Crucified God: The Way of *Jeong*,” in Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, 13-18, 79-90.

Nancy Pineda-Madrid, “Latina Theology,” in *Liberation Theologies in the United States: An Introduction*, eds. Stacey Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn. NYU Press, 2010, pages 61-85.

Gospel Undercurrents

Robert Goss and Mona West, “Introduction,” and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, “Reading the Bible from Low and Outside: Lesbians and Transgender People as God’s Tricksters,” in *Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible*. The Pilgrim Press, 2000, pages 3-9, 13-21.

Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, George Tinker. Eds. “Christology: Who Do You Say That I Am?” *Native American Theology*. Orbis Books, 2001, pages 62-84

WEEK OF DECEMBER 12

FINAL EXAM