

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
DEPARTMENT OF DIVINITY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**DR3058 SEX, SIN & SALVATION: THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF
THE HUMAN PERSON**

I. COURSE CO-ORDINATOR

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-4:30 pm, or by appointment

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Knowledge and Understanding

1. some awareness of several important stages the historical development of theological anthropology
2. some awareness of the range of contemporary Christian views on human being, with special reference to a) the role of gender and sexual identity and b) the relationship between the doctrine of the human person and the doctrine of God
3. some awareness of the debates that mark contemporary Christian discussion of human being
4. some awareness of social and cultural contexts within which the diversity of Christian perspectives in past and present have developed
5. some ability to explain and use technical terms associated with theological anthropology

B. Discipline-specific Skills

1. to develop the ability to reflect critically on the theological strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the doctrine of the human person
2. to engage beliefs different from one's own with integrity
3. to acquire a measure of intellectual flexibility through engagement with different approaches to the topic of theological anthropology
4. to gain a familiarity with the ways in which our view of what it means to be a human being are shaped by our historical and social contexts
5. to acquire precision in thinking through the formulation of a coherent theological position of one's own
6. to acquire some confidence in addressing questions vigorously debated both within the church and the wider society

C. Transferable Skills

1. to be able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
2. to be able to gather, analyse and assess material from both primary and secondary literature
3. to improve skills in arguing to a conclusion
4. to be able to work collaboratively with others on a project
5. to be able to use IT for research and for keeping apprised of developments within the course
6. to be able to undertake an independent research project on a set topic
7. to improve discipline in the organisation of one's time

III. ASSESSMENT (WITH REFERENCE TO CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES)

A. Class Preparation and Attendance

Students are expected to have read assigned texts prior to the class meeting in which they are to be discussed and to participate in seminar discussions. **CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOME: C2, C7**

Students are to post a short (no more than 150 words) response to a question placed on the website bulletin board prior to nine of the seminar sessions. The topics for which responses will be required are listed on the bulletin board, which may be accessed from the home page of the course website (see section VI below for the website URL) While students' responses will not be marked, they will be reviewed by the Course Co-ordinator and serve as the basis for seminar

discussion (for which reason it is recommended that students bring copies of their responses with them to seminar). **CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES: A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, C1, C2, C5**

** Please note that class certificates will be refused to students who fail to attend at least 75% of class meetings without a medical or other approved excuse. Details of penalties for non-attendance, as well as late submission of work can be found in the document, Student Attendance, Performance and Assessment, which is available in the departmental office.

B. Seminar Presentation

Every student will be responsible for participating in a debate on one of the assigned topics listed in section below. This presentation will count 10% toward the final mark. **CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES: A2, A3, A5, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, C1, C2, C3, C4, C7**

C. Essay

Students are required to prepare one essay of approximately 2500 words in length on one of the following topics:

1. Assess the strengths and weaknesses Karl Barth's understanding of the relationship between man and woman in *Church Dogmatics*, III.2, pp. 285-324.
2. Give a critical assessment of Wolfhart Pannenberg's understanding of human being as outlined in his *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, chapter 8.
3. Give a critical evaluation of account of the relationship between anthropology and christology given by Rosemary Ruether in chapters 4-5 of *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*.

The essay is due in the Divinity Office (KCG11) on **Friday, 20 December at 12:00 noon** and will count 40% toward the final mark. Please observe the following guidelines when submitting your essays:

- Essays **must** be submitted to the departmental office as hard copy. Electronic submissions (i.e., email text or attachment) are not acceptable.
- Essays **must** be submitted with a completed essay self-evaluation form, which may be downloaded from the course website. *One CAS point will be deducted from the final mark of all essays submitted without a completed self-evaluation form.*
- The pages of your essay should be joined with a staple in the upper left-hand corner (a stapler is available in the Divinity Office). Please do **not** put your essays in plastic covers or pouches.

CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES: A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, C1, C2, C3, C5, C6

D. Examination

There will be a three-hour final examination, which will count 50% toward the final mark (*n.b.*, however, that departmental regulations stipulate no student will be awarded a passing mark for a course who fails to achieve a CAS mark of 8 on the final examination). The examination will be comprised of three essay questions: one based on each of the three sections of the course. Students will be permitted to take one A4 sheet of notes with them into the examination hall. **CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B3, B4, B6, C1, C2, C3**

IV. COURSE STRUCTURE

This course includes two class meetings per week, as follows:

Tuesdays from 2:00-4:00, in KCT4

Fridays from 2:00-4:00, in KCF9

After an introductory week of lectures, the course is divided into three thematic sections. In sections 1 and 2 (with the exception of week 8 - see section VIII below) the first class meeting each week will be a lecture by the Course Co-ordinator and the second will be a seminar based on a close reading of one of the assigned texts. All class meetings in section 3 of the course will be in seminar format.

V. REQUIRED TEXTS

Hauerwas, Stanley. *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977.

Rogers, Eugene F., Jr. *Sexuality and the Christian Body*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

The texts for the assigned readings from Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine can be found on the web at <<http://ccel.org/fathers2/>>, or via the “Reference Library” page on the course website. Copies of the texts by Fulkerson, Gray, Jenson, Jones, Watson, Williams and Zizioulas will be distributed in class. Students will be assessed a charge of £3.00 to cover the photocopying costs of these materials.

VI. WEB PAGE

This course has its own web page, which can be accessed at:

<http://webct.abdn.ac.uk/SCRIPT/sexsin/scripts/serve_home>

The web page contains the course outline, lecture notes, a glossary of important terms, and links to other web page containing material relevant to the course. It is also the location of the course buStudents are expected to visit the web page on a regular basis in order to keep apprised of any changes to the curriculum, as well as to enter and review postings to the course bulletin board. Students are responsible for any information posted on the website by the Course Co-ordinator.

VII. CLASS SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (30/9-4/10): Basic Issues in Theological Anthropology

Lecture: Theological Anthropology as a Question of Sex, Sin and Salvation

Lecture: Dualism, Materialism and the Problem of Human Distinctiveness

SECTION 1 Sex, Sin and Salvation: Three Classic Interpretations

Week 2 (7-11/10): Irenaeus of Lyons

Lecture: Irenaeus’ Theological Setting: The Challenge of Gnosticism

Seminar: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in Irenaeus: *Against Heresies*, III.20, 22-23; IV.37-39; V.5-7, 14-16, 32, 35-36

Week 3 (14-18/10): Gregory of Nyssa

Lecture: Gregory’s Theological Setting: The Legacy of Origen

Seminar: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in Gregory: *On the Making of Man*, chs. 1-9, 16-21, 26-29

Week 4 (21-25/10): Augustine of Hippo

Lecture: Augustine’s Theological Setting: Mani and Pelagius

Seminar: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in Augustine: *The City of God*, XIII.14-20, 22-23, XIV.3, 5, 10-12, 17-19, 21-26, XXII.13-17

SECTION 2 Persons Divine and Human

Week 5 (28/10-1/11): The Personhood of God

Lecture: The Trinitarian Context of the Term “Person”

Seminar: John Zizioulas, “Personhood and Being”

Week 6 (4-8/11): The Personhood of Jesus Christ

Lecture: The Christological Application of the Term “Person”

Seminar: Serene Jones, “Women’s Nature?”

Week 7 (11-15/11): Defining Human Beings as Persons I: What We Are

Lecture: The Anthropological Application of the Term "Person"

Debate and Seminar: The Status of the *Imago Dei*

Mary M. Fulkerson, "Contesting the Gendered Subject: A Feminist Account of the *Imago Dei*"

Francis Watson, "In the Image of God"

Week 8 (18-22/11): Defining Human Beings as Persons II: What We Are Not

Seminar: Stanley Hauerwas, *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, chs.8, 10-13

THERE WILL BE NO CLASS ON FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER

Week 9 (25-29/11): Defining Human Beings as Persons III: What We Will Be

Lecture: The Eschatological Shape of Human Personhood

Seminar: Rowan Williams, "The Body's Grace" and "Nobody Knows Who I Am Till the Judgement Morning"

*SECTION 3 An Anthropological Case Study: The Theological Status of Sexual Relationships***Week 10 (2-6/12):**

Seminar: Janette Gray, RSM, "Celibacy These Days"

Seminar: "Report of the Ramsey Colloquium" and Robert Jenson, "Politics and Sex"

Week 11 (9-13/12): The Homosexuality Debate in the Churches

Seminar: Rogers, "Introduction" and ch. 1

Debate and Seminar: Homosexuality and Christian Sanctification

Rogers, chs. 2-3

Week 12 (16-20/12): Sexual Identity, Community and Personhood

Seminar: Rogers, chs. 9-10

Seminar: Rogers, chs. 11-13

VIII. COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books are suggested for those who wish to do further reading in a particular area covered in the course:

- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963-1974, especially qu. 90-102 of Part I (on the *imago Dei*) and qu. 85 of Part. II.1 on sin's damage to human nature.
- Barth, Karl. *The Doctrine of Creation*. Vol. III.2 of *Church Dogmatics*. Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*. Vol. 1 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*. Ed. Clifford J. Green. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Brown, Peter. *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. London: Faber & Faber, 1991.
- Brunner, Emil. *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*. London: Lutterworth, 1939.
- Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1937.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *The Resurrection of the Body*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.
- Cahill, Lisa S. *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Coakley, Sarah. "The Eschatological Body: Gender, Transformation, and God," in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, 153-167 (the same essay is also found in James Buckley and L. Gregory Jones, eds. *Theology and Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, 59-72).
- Chopp, Rebecca S. and Sheila Greeve Davaney, eds. *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Davies, Jon and Gerard Loughlin, eds. *Sex These Days: Essays on Theology, Sexuality and Society*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- Gunton, Colin E. and Christoph Schwöbel, eds. *Persons Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.

- Harris, Harriet. "Should We Say that Personhood Is Relational?" in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51:2 (1998), 214-234.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. "Sex in Public: Toward a Christian Ethic of Sex," in *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, 175-195.
- . "Abortion: Why the Arguments Fail," in *A Community of Character*, 212-229.
- Hefner, Philip. *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Jenson, Robert W. *The Works of God*. Vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Jones, Serene. *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- Machuga, Ric. *In Defense of the Soul: What It Means to Be Human*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002.
- McFadyen, Alistair. *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
- McFarland, Ian. *Difference and Identity: A Theological Anthropology*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2001.
- Nellas, Panayiotis. *Deification in Christ: The Nature of the Human Person*. Crestwood, NT: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*. 2 vols. The 1939 Gifford Lectures. London: Nisbet, 1941-1943.
- Pagels, Elaine. *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage, 1988.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985.
- . *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, chapter 8.
- Rahner, Karl. *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Trans. William V. Dych. New York: Crossroad, 1978, especially chapter 1.
- Ranft, P. *Women and Spiritual Equality in Christian Tradition*. New York: Macmillan, 2000.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon, 1984.
- . *Women and Redemption: : A Theological History*. London: SCM, 1997.
- Trible, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*. Vol. 3 of *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Trans. Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992.
- . *Man in History: A Theological Study*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1968.
- Watson, Francis. *Agape, Eros, Gender: Towards a Pauline Sexual Ethic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999.
- Zizioulas, John D. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1997.