

## Th. 110: The Catholic Faith: Introduction to Theology



*“To pray is to be a theologian, and to be a theologian is to pray”  
-Evagrius of Pontus (†399)*

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**Office Hours: M-F: 10:50-12:00; 1:00-2:00**  
**(Appointments highly recommended)**  
**Office: Lechner #218**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Theology 110-1: TTh @ 9:30-10:50 in S226**  
**Theology 110-2: TTh @ 2:00-3:20 in S126**

### **PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

This course will focus on the theological developments and controversies that have shaped Christian thought from the fourth to the twenty-first centuries, including: the essence and persons of the Trinity, the person and natures of Jesus Christ, theological anthropology (who are we?), soteriology (how are we saved?), the Eucharist, the differences between Catholics and Protestants, and the Catholic response to relativism, among others. Important texts from such luminaries as Augustine of Hippo, Vatican II, and Pope Benedict XVI will be read and discussed. By the end of the semester, students will be able to articulate the central theological issues and disputes that have shaped Christianity. Students also will develop a variety of skills: the ability to perform sophisticated textual analysis, critical and analytical thinking, the art of public speaking, the ability to write cogently and precisely, the craft of persuasively making an argument, and the skill of speaking extemporaneously in an articulate fashion, to name only a few.

### **FORMAT OF THE CLASS:**

- The class will begin with a review of the previous lesson: the best way to learn something is by repetition.
- Classes will consist of lectures, close reading of primary texts, discussions, and (occasionally) videos.

### **TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS:**

- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (hereafter: *CT*). Fifth Edition. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2011. ISBN: 978-4443-3514-9
- A variety of other primary source material will also be used. This material will be found on LibGuide.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Attendance:** Students may miss up to four classes for the semester. After that, the student will lose 50 points (12%). A student is counted present only when the student signs the attendance sheet at the beginning of the class. Athletes should determine how many classes will be missed due to travel games. The athlete needs to decide for him/herself at the beginning of the semester if the attendance grade will be able to be earned.
- **Quizzes.** Students will take 6 quizzes (10 questions). The student will have 15 minutes to take the quiz. Students may use open note and open texts.
- **Midterm and final exams.** Make sure your travel plans do not conflict with the course. You may not take the exams at any time other than when Brescia has specified.
- **A six-to-eight page essay.** There are three options: (1) visit a Christian religious service; (2) conduct an interview with a person of religious authority; (3) a standard research paper.

**Option 1.** Attend a Christian religious service (weekly Sunday service, baptism, funeral, wedding, etc.). You must call the church's office (at least) several days ahead of time and ask permission in order to attend the service. Ask if there is anything specific you should know ahead of time, (i.e., most traditions will not allow you to receive communion/the Eucharist unless you are part of that tradition). Please dress appropriately.

If you come from a Christian background, you must visit a Christian religious service that is very different from your own: i.e. if you are Catholic, visit a Russian Orthodox service.

**Option 2.** Do an interview with a Christian person of authority (bishop, priest, minister, deacon, elder, music director, choir director, choir member, director of child education, secretary, etc.). When you conduct your interview, have a list of creative and specific questions. Do not just arrive and say "so, tell me about Catholicism ...". If you come from a Christian background, this interview should be done with a Christian person from outside your own tradition.

Both options are designed to get you to move beyond the classroom and get you to try to experience Christianity in the "real world." So, there are a number of issues that you could address that would make for an interesting essay in addition to the basic who, what, when, where, why, and how questions.

The list of questions I have provided below is not exhaustive; it is intended as a guide for *how* to think about your project. Devise some of your own questions as you interact with this assignment. **Please do not** simply take this list I have provided and "fill in the blanks." Rather, craft your paper into a cohesive essay that shows you have put serious thought and effort into this project.

- What did you learn about the religion through your project?
- How does your experience with this project relate to the class lectures, close reading of texts, class discussions and the book chapters?
- What do you find similar or different between your experience and lectures?
- What did you taste in your experience that could not come through in lectures?
- What were you surprised to learn?
- Did anything “click” in your experience that you had learned about in class but it wasn't until your project that it finally sunk in?
- What did you take from your experience that will last with you for a long time?
- How do the theological issues that we have discussed in this class relate to the day-to-day events in a church?

**Option 3.** You may do a standard research project that should consist of you making an argument. In other words, don't just give a summary; have a thesis. Your topic must be approved by the teacher by Week 11. You must use 6-8 sources (only one encyclopedia; Wikipedia is never a valid source; only one dictionary; you may only have a maximum of two websites; you must have a minimum of 4 books or scholarly journal articles).

Style: The student will use: Times New Roman; 12 point font; double spacing; 1 inch margins.

Paper Submission Policy: The paper will be submitted to the teacher two different ways: (1) a hard copy will be given to the professor on the last day of class; (2) students will submit an electronic copy to Turnitin.com.

Grade Distribution:

Attendance: 50 points

Quizzes: 60 pts

Midterm: 100 pts

Final: 100 pts

Paper: 100 pts

Grading Scale:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Equivalent</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>100-92</b>
<b>A-</b>		<b>91-90</b>
<b>B+</b>		<b>89-87</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>86-82</b>
<b>B-</b>		<b>81-80</b>
<b>C+</b>		<b>79-77</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>76-72</b>
<b>C-</b>		<b>71-70</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Lowest Passing</b>	<b>69-60</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>59-0</b>

## **POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- If the student chooses to come to class, he or she must not be tardy, as arriving late is distracting to the instructor, disruptive to colleagues, and it is disrespectful. If the student is late, the student should sit in the row closest to the door so as to cause as little disturbance as possible.
- Students may submit assignments before the deadline. However, if a student turns in work after the deadline, 20% will be deducted from the grade. The sole exception to this policy is if the teacher hears from the Dean of Students due to a case of extreme emergency.
- Students must do all of the reading for the week and *bring* all of the texts that are assigned for the week to class. Students may not read their texts off of a computer or phone. Students must print the texts in the computer lab.
- There is to be no texting, emailing, or instant messaging during class.
- Students may not sleep in the class.
- Students must regularly check their Brescia email account as I will be emailing important information to it.
- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a documented disability and may need accommodations to participate fully in this course, please contact Dr. Dolores Kiesler (Office 254 on the second floor of the Administration Building.) All academic accommodations must be approved through her office. Please stop by or call 270-686-4259 to make an appointment.
- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT POLICY:** There is to be absolutely no plagiarism in this class. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, there are two things you should do **BEFORE** you submit an assignment: (1) read the plagiarism statement that is available on the Brescia University website; (2) ask the teacher. If a student is caught, he or she will be reported to the University and will fail the course.
- This class fulfills the major requirement for the Theology major and is a GER approved course.



## SCHEDULE FOR THE SEMESTER

### **Why Study Theology?**

Thus. Jan. 16 : “Why Study God? The Role of Theology at a Catholic University.” By John Cavadini (handout).

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### **The Trinity**

Tue. Jan. 21: The Patristic Period: *CT* pp. 5-21; Emperors Constantine and Licinius: *Edict of Milan* (LibGuide).

Thur. Jan. 23: The Trinity: *CT* pp. 234-249; Arius: pp. 265-267 (LibGuide); *Creed of Nicea* (LibGuide); *Creed of Constantinople* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- Why is it so difficult for Christianity to talk about the Trinity?
  - What is the relationship between God the Father and the Word?
  - What is the difference between the Arian and Nicene positions on the Trinity?
  - So what?
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### **Christology**

Tue. Jan. 28: Christology: *CT* pp. 265-287; *Tome of Leo* (LibGuide); *Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon* (LibGuide).

Thur. Jan. 30: “Sacrifice” from the *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (Libguide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- Who is Jesus Christ for the Christian tradition?
  - What are the different ways that some have thought about Christ?
  - How does the New Testament describe Jesus?
  - So What?
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### **Theological Anthropology**

Tue. Feb. 4: Human Nature, Sin, and Grace: *CT* pp. 18-20; 348-55; Pelagius: *Letter to Demetrias* (LibGuide).

Thur. Feb. 6: **Quiz.** Augustine: *On the Grace of Christ* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- How does each author think differently about our ability to avoid sin?
  - How do Augustine and Pelagius differ on the concept of grace?
  - What is original sin?
  - So What?
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### **St. Augustine's *Confessions***

Tue. Feb. 11: Augustine: *CT* pp. 11-12. Augustine's *Confessions*: Books 1 through 2.

Thur. Feb. 13: Augustine's *Confessions*: Books 3 through 4.

Tue. Feb. 18: Augustine's *Confessions*: Books 5 through 6.

Thur. **Quiz.** Feb. 20: Augustine's *Confessions*: Books 7 through 9.

A few questions to think about when reading:

- In Book I:I, Augustine says "You have made us for yourself, Oh Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." What does he mean by that?
  - In Book II, why does Augustine tell us about his lust? Is he simply trying to titillate? Or, is there something more meaningful he is trying to convey?
  - In Book III, how did Augustine characterize his thoughts on love?
  - In Book IV, how does Augustine feel about friendship?
  - In Book V, who were the Manichees?
  - In Book VI, how do Augustine's feelings towards Christianity begin to change?
  - So What?
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### **The Eucharist**

Tue. Feb. 25: Thomas à Kempis: Book IV of *The Imitation of Christ* (LibGuide).

Thur. Feb. 27: **Quiz.** Selection from Robert Barron's *Eucharist* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- What is the Eucharist?
  - What does it do?
  - What are differences and similarities between the medieval presentation (Kempis) of the Eucharist and the contemporary one (Barron)?
  - So What?
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### **Midterm and Break**

Tue. Mar. 4: Review for Midterm

Thur. Mar. 6: \*MIDTERM\*

Tue. Mar. 11: NO CLASS

Thur. Mar. 13: NO CLASS

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### **Early Modernity: The Reformation**

Tue. Mar. 18: Martin Luther: *95 Theses; Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (LibGuide).

Thur. Mar. 20: Martin Luther: *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation; Commentary on Galatians* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- What are Martin Luther's main problems with the Church?
  - How are his arguments similar and different from what we have seen before?
  - How does he understand who gets to interpret Scripture?
  - How does he understand how we are justified
  - How does he understand the Eucharist?
  - So What?
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### **Early Modernity: The Catholic Response to Protestantism**

Tue. Mar. 25: Council of Trent: *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures; Decree on Justification; Decree of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist* (LibGuide).

Thur. Mar. 27: **Quiz.** Council of Trent: *Tridentine Creed* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- When does the Council agree with Martin Luther?
- When does the Council disagree with Luther?
- Who gets to interpret Scripture?

- How are we justified?
  - According to the *Tridentine Creed*, what are the main similarities and differences between Catholics and Protestants?
  - So What?
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### **Modernity/Age of Reason/The Enlightenment**

Tue. Apr. 1: Thomas Paine: *The Age of Reason*. Pope Pius IX: *The Syllabus of Errors* (LibGuide).

Thur. Apr. 3: Pope John XXIII: *Pope John Convoles the Council; Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council* (LibGuide).

Tue. Apr. 8: Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium (Light of Nations)* (LibGuide).

Thur. Apr. 10: Vatican II: *Unitatis Redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism)*. *Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)* (LibGuide).

Tue. Apr. 15: Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World)* FIRST HALF OF THE PDF: (pp. 903-947) (LibGuide).

Thu. Apr. 17: **Quiz**. Pope John Paul II: *Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason)* (LibGuide).

A few questions to think about when reading:

- What are the main challenges posed to the Church during Modernity?
- What are the different ways, both positive and negative, that the Church has responded to Modernity?
- What are the important outcomes of Vatican II?
- What is the Church?
- How does the Catholic Church relate to other religions?
- How does Pope John Paul II understand the relationship between faith and reason?
- So What?

### **Postmodernity: Relativism**

Tue. Apr. 22: Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl: *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* [first half of PDF (up to Part 3)]. Pope Benedict XVI: "Dictatorship of Relativism." In *Light of the World* (LibGuide).

Thur. Apr. 24: Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl: *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* [second half of PDF] (LibGuide).



A few questions to think about when reading:

- What is relativism?
- What are its strengths?
- What are its weaknesses?
- What are the problems Pope Benedict has with the “dictatorship” of relativism?
- So What?

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### **Conclusion and Final**

Tue. Apr. 29: **Quiz.** *Notification on the Book ‘Jesus: Symbol of God’ by Father Roger Haight (Libguide).*

Thur. May. 1: **\*Paper due.\*** Review for Final Exam.

A few questions to think about when reading:

- What is Roger Haight saying, exactly?
- How is this similar and different from what we have seen this semester?
- Why does the Vatican have such a problem with what he is saying?
- What do you think should happen to Roger Haight?
- So What?

**FINAL EXAM:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Th. 110: Catholic Faith: Statement of Compliance

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the entire syllabus for Th. 110 “Catholic Faith: Introduction to Theology” for the spring semester 2014. If there are any parts of the syllabus I did not originally understand, I have asked the professor for clarification.

By signing this paper and remaining enrolled in this class, I acknowledge that I have understood the syllabus—including (but not limited to) the policies and expectations, especially concerning attendance, tardiness, reading expectations, preparedness, and plagiarism. Not only do I understand the requirements of the class, but I will abide by them.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_