# HOUSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY TH/PH 710 Theological Method

Fall 2013 Aug. 29-Dec. 12; Thursdays 5:30-8:00 Dr. Doug Kennard, Professor of New Testament 713-942-9505 <a href="mailto:dkennard@hgst.edu">dkennard@hgst.edu</a>

The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual, and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

#### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is an analytical study of theological method examining the rival philosophical and traditional contributions of philosophy of science and religion, theology, and historical exegesis as employed in the study of the historical Jesus. A Lakatos scientific and theological method is proposed to incorporate a critical realism that includes rational and analytical arguments for God with a linguistically empirical hermeneutic confirmed through a Piercian pragmatic spiral individually and with peer review (*a la* Thiselton and Ricoeur). From this exegesis, biblical theology is proposed to substantially populate the theological agenda (as was initially proposed by Gabler), within the philosophical and theological framework demonstrated. This constructive theological expression will be contextualized to missional ministry.

#### III. COURSE OBJECTIVES (TEST REVIEW: A-I)

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Define and describe various epistemologies and evaluate the relative merits of each for doing theology (exam).
- B. Determine one's particular epistemology, describe it, and make an apologetic defense for it (exam).
- C. Determine one's particular theological method, describe it, and make an apologetic defense of it (exam).
- D. Define various religious language views, identify their relationships to epistemologies and theological method, and evaluate the relative merits of each of them for doing theology (exam).
- E. State and apologetically defend one's view with regard to the meaning of religious language (exam).
- F. Defend one's view of the relative merits of subjective approaches towards the Christian God; namely, authenticity, basic belief, intuition (tacit, illumination, leading of Spirit, mysticism), religious experience, testimony of religious experience, miracles, Pascal's wager, and James' pragmatism (exam).
- G. State the following rational arguments for God (ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral arguments, and existential fit or basic belief) and identify what place (if any) they might have in one's doing theology and apologetics (exam).
- H. Describe how various epistemologies and hermeneutics relate the Bible to theology and their relative merits for doing theology (exam).
- I. Describe the method for how one does theology (exam).

- J. Describe how one will interpret various genres of the Bible and how they will contribute to his or her theology (shown in paper).
- K. Using these decisions one makes on epistemology, hermeneutics, theological method, and apologetics, write a research paper on a significant issue of theological method (paper).
- L. Evaluate several contemporary theological and hermeneutical issues (paper).

# IV. REQUIRED TEXTS (Providing a variety of evangelical theological methods to consider):

Anselm of Canterbury. *Proslogium*, <a href="http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic\_works">http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic\_works</a>, preface, chs. I-II.

Aquinas, Thomas. Summa Theologiae I.1 http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1001.htm)

- (C) Clark, David K. *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003. 1-58134-484-8
- (G) Grenz, Stanley, and John Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 0-664-22325-7
- (R) Gunton, Colin, Stephen R. Holmes, and Murray A. Rae. *The Practice of Theology: A Reader*. London: SCM Press, 2001. 0-334-02816-7
- (K) Kennard, Douglas W. *A Critical Realist's Theological Method*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013 (978-1-62032-716-6). Currently, the first four chapters are electronically housed on: <a href="http://www.hgst.edu/academics/faculty/douglas-kennard/kennard/">http://www.hgst.edu/academics/faculty/douglas-kennard/kennard/</a>

-----. *The Classical Christian God.* Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2002. The book is electronically housed on: <a href="http://www.hgst.edu/academics/faculty/douglas-kennard/kennard/">http://www.hgst.edu/academics/faculty/douglas-kennard/kennard/</a>

## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The student will read assignments in texts according to schedule. Report on the final class period. 20% of final grade.
- B. The student will engage in classroom discussion based on the reading and her thoughts. 10% of final grade.
- C. The student will complete a closed book 2-hour take home exam, which will assess the student's competency over objectives A-I. 40% of the final grade.
- D. The student will write a 3000-word position paper presenting (2/3 the paper) and critiquing (1/3 the paper) the theological method of one of the approaches itemized in the recommended bibliography of theological method (below). Grenz, Gunton, and Kennard's method is not to be the approach for this assignment. 40% of final grade.

Writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. This includes matters of style and format. The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except for the first page of the paper (not counting the title page). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings require a two-inch top margin. The student should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. He prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical or formal writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- a. Avoid 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person references ("I," "we," or "you"). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- b. Never use contractions.
- c. Avoid passive voice construction (i.e. The student should write "God chose Joshua" rather than "Joshua was chosen by God."). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- d. Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that "Brueggemann argues . . ." and at another place "Brueggemann argued . . ."). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- e. Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
- f. Grammar check works as well!
- g. All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding "it is" and "there is" in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- h. Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.
- E. Late papers will have the grade deducted at a rate of 3% per calendar day, so students should include the date on which the late paper was turned in, or the date on which Kennard finds it will be assigned to it.
- F. Attendance is expected at all classes. Students are only excused for official, college-sponsored activities. If you must miss class, be sure and get notes from another student.
- G. Criteria for grading:
  - A 90-100
  - B 80-89
  - C 70-79
  - D 60-69

- H. Extra credit of 10% of course grade can be obtained by attending, summarizing and critiquing up to ten Bible, theology or philosophy related sessions of conferences posted on my bulletin board. Each session of a conference or extracurricular lecture will be worth one of these percentage points.
- I. Attendance is expected at all classes. Class participation is 10% final grade. A failing grade will occur with four classes missed.

### V. Grading Scale:

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

#### VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time. The student could lose as much as a letter grade for excessive tardiness.
- B. Work is expected on the due date. Students should expect a grade reduction of up to one letter grade on late papers.
- C. HGST Policy on electronic equipment in classroom.

It is expected that students will use technology (cell phones, laptops computers, iPads, etc.) during classes only for the purposes of class work. Therefore, students should turn off cell phones and refrain from texting and using laptop computers during classes except for the purposes of taking notes or doing research specifically authorized by the course instructor. Students who have emergency needs not covered by this policy must ask for an exception from the course instructor.

## D. Incompletes

In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments, which are not completed by the end of the semester or term, subject to a 5-point grade reduction on the final grade of each assignment. If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and set an extension of time, not to exceed thirty calendar days from the end of the class, within which to complete the work. Additional extensions may be granted only by the Academic Dean or Associate Dean and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of "I" will be converted to the grade earned by the student up to that point. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the registrar's office by the deadline published in the school calendar.

### E. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one's own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet

plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.

- 1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
  - The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.
  - For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.
  - For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
- 2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Academic Dean.
- 3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Academic Dean. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President's decision will be final.

# F. Library Usage

A student's ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, <u>Search HGST Library Holdings</u> (<a href="http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?12m=Home&tm=Home&12m=Home">http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?12m=Home&tm=Home&12m=Home</a>), one or more of the following libraries.

- 1. Houston Public Library— Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library's website, www.houstonlibrary.org, to search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832-393-1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832-393-1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website.
- 2. Fondren Library at Rice University— The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. Please visit <a href="www.rice.edu/fondren">www.rice.edu/fondren</a> for more information. The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [www.rice.edu/fondren] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return

- the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records).
- 3. Lanier Theological Library is a new resource for scholarly theological research in the Houston area. The library is open to the public, Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM 5:00 PM. The library is a research library with no circulation privileges. Nonetheless, students should consider Lanier Library to be a valuable research option. The catalog of Lanier Library is available online: <a href="http://alexandria.lanierlibrary.net/#\_">http://alexandria.lanierlibrary.net/#\_</a>.
- 4. Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary's Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6 miles from HGST. For more information, please visit <a href="http://beran.stthom.edu">http://beran.stthom.edu</a>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.
- 5. *Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant* as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalog, go to <a href="http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi">http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi</a>.
- 6. Other options include Harris County Public Library (<a href="www.hcpl.net">www.hcpl.net</a>) and the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

### VI. CLASS SCHEDULE

- Aug. 29 Syllabus
- Sept. 5 C: Intro & 1 & 3 & 9 & 11; G: 1-2; K: <u>Introduction</u> to *A Critical Realist Theological Method* and Examples of "Romanticism" and "Existentialism" in K: <u>The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science</u> and Role of culture: G: 5; K: Contextualization; R: Part IV
  - 12 C: 4; K: <u>The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science</u> sections though renaissance humanism
  - The Role of Tradition in Theology (Exampled in Trinity Developments); G: 4 and 6; Evangelical tradition: Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium*, <a href="http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic\_works">http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic\_works</a>, preface, chs. I-II; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.1 <a href="http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1001.htm">http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1001.htm</a>); R: 1.2 & 1.3 & 1.4 A & B; C: 5 & 6 & 7
  - Role of reason: K: <u>The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science</u> sections on "Descartes' Rationalism", "Kant", and "Hegel"; Kennard's *The Classical Christian God* ch 3 Eternity and Everlasting.
- Oct. 3 Role of experience: K: The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science section beginning with "Locke and Newton's Empiricism"; Kennard's *The Classical Christian God* ch. 9 God's Sovereignty and Human Free Will and 11 The Sovereignty of God and Prayer; R: 1.4 C & 1.5; C: 8

- Role of pragmatism: K: <u>The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science</u> sections beginning with "Marxism" through "Conventional Post-Modernism"; R: Part 3; C: 10
- 17 K: <u>The Relationship of Philosophy, Theology, and Science</u> section on Critical Realism; R: Part 2
- G: 3; K: <u>A Thiselton Ricoeur Hermeneutic</u> and "Biblical Authority in the Contemporary Hermeneutical Scene"; R: 1.1; C: 2 &12
- K: "The Reef of Biblical Theology" and "Creation and Fall"; Kennard's *The Classical Christian God* ch. 5 <u>Elohim, the Creator</u>, 6 <u>YAHWEH, The God of the Exodus</u>, 7 <u>Psalm 139</u>: A Hymn and Lament to the Omniscient and Omnipresent <u>God</u>, and 8 <u>Incomparable YAHWEH</u>
- Nov. 7 K: "Biblical Theology Affecting Systematics"
  - 14 **Exam Due**; K: "<u>Biblical Anthropology as a Creation and Revelation Framework for Doing Bio-Ethics</u>" and "A Transactional Model of Human Based on Biblical Theology
  - G: 7 and 8; Kennard's *The Classical Christian God* ch. 10 <u>Problems of Evil</u> and 12 <u>Thy Kingdom Come</u>; K: "Theology of Work"
- Dec. 5 K: Putting the Method Together; C: Conclusion
  - 12 **Paper Due**

#### **Bibliography**

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