

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY (21-505)

Fall 2014 – Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Room 108 – Fridays (9:15-12:15)

Instructor: Nancy Elizabeth Bedford (nancy.bedford@garrett.edu)
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I. GOAL:

The goal of this class is to introduce students to the approach to theological reflection generally called systematic theology, which is an attempt to deal in a critical, coherent, cohesive and constructive manner with the major *loci* (“places” or “doctrines”) of the Christian faith, which have been identified by the wider community of faith through the centuries as central to Christian reflection and praxis.

II. OBJECTIVES:

1. To become acquainted with the character and method of Christian systematic theology;
2. To learn the skill of thinking systematically about theological loci;
3. To reflect critically on the implications of particular theological constructions;
4. To foster theological discernment;
5. To articulate an understanding of the significant loci;
6. To become a competent interpreter of Christian theology at an introductory level;
7. To understand the value of theology for multiple settings including congregations, denominational settings and the public square;
8. To be empowered to *know* theology, *be* a theologian and *do* theology, to the glory of God and for the flourishing of creation.

III. REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Reflection on *Theology: A Very Short Introduction*** (second edition) pp. 1-124. Write a 6 page double-spaced paper (font: Times New Roman 12) that includes an introductory paragraph, description and analysis of the main ideas, and a conclusion that reflects what questions (raised by the author) the student would further like to ponder during the semester. Upload to Moodle by September 5, 11:55 CST (10 % of grade).
2. **Oral presentation on a classic text** (sign up on first day). The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint the student with a primary source in the tradition, and for the student to share that knowledge with the class. **In 15 minutes exactly**, the student will provide a short introduction to the author that includes biographical data and *historical/geographical* context (5 min.), a summary of the gist of the

text (7 min.), and major questions that arise from sections worth highlighting (3 min.). The 15 minutes will be timed strictly (practicing the presentation beforehand is therefore essential). See below for further grading criteria. Use *primary sources* for the reading and *reliable* secondary sources for the background. Bring the primary source to class to pass around. Also bring a one-page summary of the presentation to pass around to your classmates and instructors. For many of the student colleagues, this will be a first introduction to the text and author, and that should be taken into account. Along with the oral presentation and handout, the presenter will provide a **written summary** of the presentation for the instructors (with correct referencing of the sources, using footnotes). It should be 5 double-spaced pages. It is easy to find electronic versions of most of the texts for a preliminary perusal, but the student should also look for a hard copy in the library, preferably with a critical apparatus (20 % of grade).

3. **Exercise in theological autobiography.** Inspired by the readings in the Phan and Lee book (among others), in 6-8 pages attempt to reflect *theologically* on your life or aspects of your life by answering the following questions: (1) What do you think your “standpoint” (think of class, race, culture, nationality, religious background, gender, denomination, age, “disability,” etc.) allows you to see? (2) What do you suspect are some of the blind spots you have as a result of your particular standpoint? (3) In what (new or old) directions would you like to be heading theologically? (4) What are your persistent theological questions and why? (5) How does “faith seek understanding” out of your own particularity? Upload to Moodle by September 19, 11:55 pm CST (10 % of grade)
4. **Theological reflection paper** (9-10 pages, double-spaced) on the section “Reason and Revelation” of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* (pp. 71-159). The paper should have three evenly divided parts: (a) a summary of Tillich’s argument in your own words; (b) comparison with what you read about revelation in our assigned texts (such as Inbody or Morse; use footnotes when you reference other readings); (c) a contextual response to Tillich’s argument (how is it illuminating –or not- in your ministry context, and why). Don’t mix the parts up (do a strict summary with no evaluation in the first part). Upload to Moodle by October 10 11:55 CST (15 % of grade).
5. **Thesis and annotated outline for final paper** (3-4 pages). This assignment will help you prepare for the final comprehensive integrative paper (see description below). An annotated outline includes the main points of an outline with a short description of what each section will entail. Include a title, thesis statement and outline (its main subtitles would be the table of contents for the final paper) in response to the prompt (“What is Christian theology, who does it, what does it include and to what end do we do it?”). Make sure that for every section you include a short description of what you will cover and a mention of the sources you will use in that section. Include your bibliography. You will have a chance to

- discuss this outline individually with the instructors. Due December 5 in class (bring three hard copies). 10 % of grade
6. **Final comprehensive and integrative paper** (4,000-5,000 words, double-spaced, font Times New Roman size 12 points) that will function as a take-home exam. The paper answers the question: “*What is Christian theology, who does it, what does it include and to what end do we do it?*” Make sure the paper covers the *prolegomena* and *all the loci* (doctrines) covered in the semester. It should make lucid reference to *all* of our readings, as well as to the primary source the student presented orally earlier in the semester. Use Turabian style (title page, table of contents, subtitles, footnotes, etc). For the comprehensive grading criteria see the grid below. Proofread your paper more than once before handing it in. If it requires outside proofreading, take that into account in your time management. Upload to Moodle by December 19, 11:55 p.m. CST (25 % of grade).
 7. **Alternative final project.** Another option we will offer is for the student to develop a piece of artwork that answers the question above. For example, it would be possible to paint or sculpt or dance or film an answer to the question. In the past students have made films, written musical scores, sculpted, painted, etc. This version of the project requires the presentation of the artwork, choreography, etc. in class on December 5 for peer review, as well as **an 6-8 page written explanation** (following Turabian style) of the work due Dec. 19 by 11:55 p.m. CST. The paper should make reference to the theological sources studied in the semester and serve as an interpretation of the piece. Choosing this option requires making an appointment beforehand to obtain approval for the project and its methodology from the professor. It is not an “easier” option than the essay paper but can be a very satisfying experience (25 % of grade).
 8. **Class participation** evincing thoughtful reading and reflection of texts for the day. Expect to dedicate at least two-three hours of reading for each hour of class, i.e. six-nine hours of reading per week, not counting work on papers and presentations. The class presupposes the readings and builds on them. Reading thoughtfully requires *time to think* about what you have read. Whenever possible, class will include seminar-style discussions. See the rubric below for what is expected (10% of grade).
 9. The student must **complete all assignments** in order to pass the class. No exceptions. Late submissions will be marked down automatically.
 10. Feel free to ask questions, whether in class, via email, during the break, after class or by making an appointment. If English is not your native language and you have questions, often an email message is a good method of communication. **At least one personal conversation** with the instructor is highly recommended. Make yourself and your theological quest(ions) known. This will help you also in your participation grade. All of your theological inquiries are both necessary and welcome (no need to impress anyone with the sophistication of your questions).

IV. GRADING SYSTEM

A	95-100	B-	80-82	D+	62-65
A-	91-94	C+	75-79	D	58-61
B+	88-90	C	70-74	D-	51-57
B	83-87	C-	66-69	F	0-50

V. EXPECTATIONS:

1. **Punctual and regular attendance** at all class sessions. The student is expected to be present in class (physically and mentally). Our class discussions will supplement and integrate the readings rather than repeat that material. For that reason, missing a class damages the learning process. Furthermore, a three-hour block is equivalent to two weekly classes. Consequently, absences *will* affect a student's grade negatively. Two absences from a full class session will result in a substantial lowering of the grade; three absences constitute an "F." Partial absences due to tardiness or early departures will count towards missing a full class session. Attendance at the complete first class session is mandatory.
2. **Make-up work.** If a student must miss a class, he or she must inform the professors in advance and write a one-page summary of each of the chapters in all of the readings for the day (required *and* optional), to be sent via email to the teaching assistant.
3. **Plagiarism is not tolerated;** cf. the section in the Handbook on how plagiarism is handled at Garrett-Evangelical; it is grounds for academic dismissal. *Do not present the work of others as your own;* always footnote ideas you have taken from other scholars.
4. **Matters of style:** The use of **inclusive language** for God and for humanity is expected. Rather than "God himself," for instance, students should write "God godself" and rather than "mankind," a student should use "humankind." Always use font Times New Roman size 12 points, double-spaced, with footnotes in *Chicago Manual "Notes and Bibliography"* style; cf. http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).
5. A student should **not** ask for an extension unless he or she severely ill (incapacitated) or is confronted with another such dire circumstance. **Requests for extensions are strongly discouraged.**

VI. MAKING SPACE FOR GRACE:

1. In order for our class to make room for sustained focus and contemplation, **it will be an electronics-free zone.** That means that *during class time* nothing at all that can be turned on and off with a switch will be turned on. Silencing the gadgets is

insufficient; they should be turned off. If a student believes that he or she cannot spend three hours a week without multitasking during class, the student should drop this course immediately. Staying in the class means that the student embraces the notion of an electronics-free zone for instruction. We hope to experience this weekly time without external interruption as a space for grace. Feel free to turn on your gadgets during the break, but then please turn them back off. The lack of “electronic noise” is an important dimension of the spiritual practice of “presence” to God and to each other that we need to do good theology together. The exception to this practice is that the student may use Powerpoint or other pedagogical tools for the oral presentation.

2. The student is welcome to buy electronic versions of the books and to use an e-reader **outside of class**. However, e-readers are not allowed in the classroom. Instead, the student should bring his or her hard-copy notes with page references to class to aid in discussion.
3. If a student requires help with translation or with vocabulary, he or she should bring a **pocket (paper) dictionary** and/or raise his or her hand for clarification. International students are encouraged to ask for a “replay” of any explanation in class that has gone too quickly for them to follow well in English.
4. Doodling on paper during class is allowed and encouraged: liberate your creativity!

VII. COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Required Textbooks:

Evans, James H., Jr. *We Have Been Believers. An African-American Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0800698782. \$19.72 at Cokesbury.com.

Ford, David. *Theology: A Very Short Introduction*, second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN-10: 0199679975. \$10.38 at Amazon.com.

Hayes, Diana. *Standing in the Shoes my Mother Made: A Womanist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0800697570. \$17.60 at Cokesbury.com.

Inbody, Tyron. *The Faith of the Christian Church. An Introduction to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. ISBN-0-8082-4151-1. \$17.68 at Cokesbury.com.

Lee, Sang Hyun. *From a Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 9780800696689. \$24.00 at Cokesbury.com.

Morse, Christopher. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*. 2nd edition.

New York: Continuum, 2009. ISBN-13: 9780567027436. \$34.95 at Cokesbury.com.

Phan, Peter C. and Jung Young Lee (eds.). *Journeys at the Margins. Toward and Autobiographical Theology in Asian-American Perspective*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8146-2464-2. \$ 15.71 at Amazon.com.

Slee, Nicola. *Faith and Feminism. An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003. ISBN 0-232-52486-6. \$27.01 at Amazon.com.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology. Volume One*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973. ISBN-13: 978-0-226-80337-1; price \$ 22.50 at Cokesbury.com.

Further Recommended Resources:

González, Justo. *Essential Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0664228101. \$16.25 at Cokesbury.com.

Patte, Daniel (gen. ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0521527859. \$30.07 at Amazon.com.

Placher, William (ed.). *Essentials of Christian Theology*. Louisville: WJK, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0664223953. \$26.00 at Cokesbury.com)

Valentín, Benjamín (ed). *In Our Own Voices: Latino/a Renditions of Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1570758904. \$20.80 at Cokesbury.com.

VIII. COURSE READINGS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS:

PART ONE: PROLEGOMENA

1. INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY AND TO THE COURSE (SEPT. 5)

Required reading: *Theology. A Very Short Introduction*, 1-124.

N.B. Reflection paper on *Theology: A Very Short Introduction* due Sept. 5

2. WHAT ARE WE DOING WHEN WE DO THEOLOGY – AND WHY? (SEPT. 12)

Required reading: *Not Every Spirit*, 1-70; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 1-26.

[**Optional reading:** Prefaces to Morse, xiii-xx and Inbody, xi-xxvii and 27-55.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Martin Luther, *The Heidelberg Disputation* (April 26, 1518)
- ✓ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion. Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (Speeches I and II)

3. SPEAKING IN OUR OWN VOICES: PARTICULARITY AND UNIVERSALITY IN DOING THEOLOGY (SEPT. 19)

Required reading: *Standing in the Shoes*, vii-xi and 1-20; *Journeys at the Margin*, 23-39 (Lee), 63-79 (Nagano), 81-102 (Ng), 103-112 (Kim), 113-133 (Phan).

[Optional reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VIII]

Texts for oral presentations

- ✓ Augustine, *Confessions*, Books I, II, VIII, IX
- ✓ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*, Long Text, First Revelation

N.B. Theological autobiography paper due September 19.

4. DOING THEOLOGY FROM LIMINAL SPACES (SEPT. 26)

Required reading: *From a Liminal Place* (entire)

[Optional reading: Introduction to Phan and Lee, xi-xxvii.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philipians* and *Martyrdom*
- ✓ Bonaventure, *The Life of Saint Francis*

5. THE METHOD AND MATERIAL CONTENTS OF THEOLOGY (OCT. 3)

Required reading: *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 3-68; *Faith and Feminism*, 1-12.

[Optional reading: Morse, 73-85.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Second Theological Oration (On Theology)*
- ✓ John Damascene, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Book I

6. WORD OF GOD AND WORDS ABOUT GOD (OCT. 10)

Required reading: *We Have Been Believers*, 13-88; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 56-80.

[Optional reading: Morse, 86-112.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Gregory of Nazianzus, *First Theological Oration (Against the Disciples of Eunomius)*
- ✓ John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book I

N.B. Theological reflection paper (Tillich) due October 10.

PART TWO: LOCI

7. PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHRISTOLOGY (OCT. 17)

Required reading: *We Have Been Believers*, 89-114; *Faith and Feminism*, 48-71; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 189-245.

[Optional reading: Morse, 139-170.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*
- ✓ Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*
- ✓ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Third Theological Oration* (First Discourse on the Son)

8. READING DAY (OCT. 24)

9. CHRISTOLOGICAL PNEUMATOLOGY (OCT. 31)

Required reading: *Not Every Spirit*, 171-197; *Faith and Feminism*, 72-82 and 95-105.

[Optional reading: Evans, 183-204].

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*
- ✓ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fifth Theological Oration* (On the Holy Spirit)

10. GOD CONFESSED AS TRIUNE (NOV. 7)

Required reading: *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 81-109; *Not Every Spirit*, 113-138; *Faith and Feminism*, 25-36.

[Optional reading: Tillich, 163-289.]

Texts for oral presentation:

- ✓ Augustine, *De Trinitate* (The Trinity), Book I.
- ✓ Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (Long Text), Fourteenth Revelation
- ✓ Richard of St. Victor, *Book Three of the Trinity*

11. THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY (NOV. 14)

Required reading: *We Have Been Believers*, 115-138; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 164-188; *Not Every Spirit*, 256-287.

[Optional reading: Slee, 37-47; Hayes, 161-195.]

Texts for oral presentation:

- ✓ John Ruusbroec, *The Sparkling Stone*
- ✓ Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian* and *On the Bondage of the Will*
- ✓ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*

12. CREATION OLD AND NEW (NOV. 21)

Required reading: *Not Every Spirit*, 198-224 and 318-346; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 110-137.

[Optional reading: Insbody, 138-163]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Augustine, *Confessions*, Books XII-XIII
- ✓ Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Book I (The Creator and Creation)

13. THANKSGIVING BREAK (NOV. 28)

14. THE HOPE (ESCHATOLOGY) OF THE CHURCH (ECCLESIOLOGY) (DEC. 5)

Required reading: *Standing in the Shoes*, 23-71; *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 246-274 and 303-330.

[**Optional reading:** Inbody, 275-302; Evans, 139-182.]

Texts for oral presentations:

- ✓ Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*
- ✓ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*
- ✓ *The Pastor of Hermas*

N.B. *Three copies of annotated outline of final paper are due in hard copy today for class*

15. INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS ON OUTLINE FOR FINAL PAPER (*Wednesday Dec. 10*):
(By appointment from 9:15-12:15)

16. FINAL COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATIVE PAPER DUE (*Friday, December 19* by 11:55 p.m. CST).

IX. GRADING CRITERIA FOR CLASS PARTICIPATION

	A	B	C	D/F
Frequency and Quality	Attends class regularly and <i>always contributes</i> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues, building on others' ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, expanding the class' perspective, and appropriately challenging assumptions	Attends class regularly and <i>sometimes contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <i>rarely contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <i>never contributes</i> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.

	and perspectives.			
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X. GRADING RUBRIC FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

Date: _____

Student: _____

Author: _____

Primary source: _____

Introduction - Accuracy

- Biographical (birth/death, significant life events or family matters)
- Historical (critical issues affecting the writing and/or time of the writing)

Text Summation – Key Points properly/completely summarized

Questions/Comments appropriate for the reading:

Overall Presentation: clear, concise, comprehensive, complete, voice, tone, mannerisms (rocking/you know/distracting hand gestures), use of time.

Well-written summary to accompany oral presentation

Grade: _____

XI. GRADING RUBRIC FOR FINAL PAPER:

1. Presentation

1 2 3 4 5

- (clarity of prose, spelling competence, sentences are complete and grammatical, paragraphs flow logically, title page with relevant title, table of contents, subtitles, bibliography, footnotes, etc.)
2. Clear statement of thesis 1 2 3 4 5
(the main “point” of the paper is clearly stated in the beginning)
3. Internal coherence with thesis 1 2 3 4 5
(the paper actually makes the point(s) suggested in the title and the thesis; the body of the paper flows logically and clearly)
4. Description of Sources 1 2 3 4 5
(the student describes fairly, in her or his own words, the position of the theorists cited)
5. Relevance and/or comprehensiveness of sources 1 2 3 4 5
(breadth of the relevant sources used in composing the essay)
6. Critical Engagement with Sources 1 2 3 4 5
(whether a student’s work has taken the step *beyond mere description* and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis)
7. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme 1 2 3 4 5
(not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position)
8. Adherence to instructions 1 2 3 4 5
(did the student actually carry out the instructions in the syllabus as to nature of the assignment, page length, questions to be answered, etc.?)
9. Conclusion 1 2 3 4 5
(the paper uses the conclusion to tie up loose ends; it does not simply restate the thesis)