

Saint Paul School of Theology
TH305 Introduction to Systematic Theology
Fall 2004

Instructor

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Office Hours

By appointment and during
posted office hours, which vary
weekly to accommodate the
instructor's class and meeting
schedule

Course Meeting Times and Place

Tuesday, 1:10-4:00 p.m.
Kansas-Winger 407

Course Description

This course is designed as an initial exploration of the discipline of theology. Readings and lectures cover such diverse areas as theological method, spirituality, theological epistemology, sociology of knowledge, biblical world view and varying arts of interpretation with regard to, for example, God, human condition, alienation and sin, death and hope, church and ministry, love and justice, mission and interreligious dialogue, ultimate peace and the future of the world. (3 credit hours)

Learning Goals

1. The primary goal of the course is to promote understanding and appreciation of the breadth and depth of theological strands within the Christian tradition.
2. Learning begins with attention to methods, tasks, language, sources, and criteria for adequacy that permit sustained theological reflection necessary in systematic theology and which also inform the scholarly and pastoral work of Christian vocations.
3. Learning includes familiarity with historical doctrines and constructive contemporary theology, which attends to the continuity, diversity, and development of the Christian tradition.
4. Learning recognizes the diversity of doctrinal and theological expression within Christianity and acknowledges that context, class, gender, and race are some of the factors that shape the development of Christian thought and express the valuable tensions in Christian theology.

Required Texts

Each student must choose three of the following reading options:

1. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (all volumes), or
Hendrikus Berkhoff, *Christian Faith*, or
Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, and *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*, or
John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, or
Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (all volumes).
2. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (all volumes).
3. Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* or
Ted Peters, *God—The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era*.
4. Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* or
James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Doctrine, Systematic Theology*, Volume 2.
5. John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*, or
Marjorie Suchocki, *God-Christ-Church*.
6. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, or
Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, George E. "Tink" Tinker, *A Native American Theology*, or
Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría, editors, *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*.
7. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, or
James H. Evans, *We Have Been Believers*.
8. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Feminism and God-Talk* or
Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity*.
9. With permission of instructor and with good rationale for inclusion, a student may include one other book option. Consultation with the instructor is required.

Course Schedule

Reading Week:	October 18-22
Thanksgiving Recess:	November 22-26
Session 1 August 31	Introducing the Course Topic: Definitions and Tasks of <i>Theology</i>
Session 2 September 7	Topic: Sources, Methods, and Language in Theology Reading Key Words: scripture, tradition, experience, culture, analogy, formative factors, metaphor, analogy, epistemology, faith/belief and reason/knowledge, Truth/truth, criteria for adequacy, Discussion: “method in theology and locus of authority”
Session 3 September 14	Topic: Doctrine of God (or Models of God) Reading Key Words: deism, monarchialism (King), dialogical (I-Thou) model, agential model, organic model, supernaturalism, pantheism, panentheism, God as Liberator, God as Black, God as Red, God/dess Discussion: “God and God’s relation to the world”
Session 4 September 21	Topic: Attributes of God Reading Key Words: attributes, perfection, transcendence, immanence, goodness, righteousness/justice, omnipotence, freedom, omniscience, eternal (everlasting), omnipresence, love, via negativa, gender and inclusive language Discussion: “describing God”
September 28	No class meeting
Session 5 October 5	Topic: Doctrine of Creation (Theology of Nature) Reading Key Words: creation, miracle, nature, world, revelation, general revelation, existence of God, science and religion, biblical creation accounts, contingency and dependence on God, creation <i>ex nihilo</i> , <i>creatio continua</i> , providence Discussion: “divine action in nature”

Session 6 October 12	Topic: Theodicy Reading Key Words: sin, evil, moral evil, natural evil, free will Discussion: “moral and natural evil”
Reading Week October 19	No class meeting
Session 7 October 26	Topic: Christology Reading Key Words: historical Jesus, person, special revelation, parables, miracles, christological councils, gender, Black Christ Discussion: “person of Jesus Christ as revelation”
Session 8 November 2	Topic: Christology, Soteriology Reading Key Words: salvation, atonement, redemption, grace, liberation, election, predestination, universal salvation, justification, sanctification, law and gospel Discussion: “work of Christ”
Session 9 November 9	Topic: Doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity Reading Key Words: pneumatology, metaphors for the Holy Spirit (Advocate, Comforter) immanent Trinity, economic Trinity, triune God, Godhead, symbolism and metaphors Discussion: “symbolism of the Trinity and contemporary theology”
Session 10 November 16	Topic: Doctrine of Humanity (Theological Anthropology) Reading Key Words: image of God (<i>imago Dei</i>), soul-body, ontology, male and female Discussion: “the nature of humanity”
Thanksgiving Recess November 23	No class meeting

Session 11 November 30	Topic: Doctrine of Humanity (Theological Anthropology) Reading Key Words: freedom and free will, the Fall, sin, moral evil, social or systemic sin, power and sin, <i>hubris</i> , radical evil, gender and sin, faith and works Discussion: “fallen humanity”
Session 12 December 7	Topic: Eschatology Reading Key Words: last things, eschatology, afterlife, eternal life, Kingdom of God, new creation, new heaven and earth, realized or future, liberation Discussion: “Christian hope”
Session 13 December 14	Topic: Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology) Reading Key Words: marks of the church, ecclesiology, body of Christ, models of the Church, sacraments, worship, ministry (<i>kerygma, koinonia, diakonia, didache, leitourgia</i>), discipleship, Discussion: “mission and ministry of the Church” Due: Class Participation Self-Evaluation Reading Log

Course Requirements

1. *Class participation.* Class participation is expected of all students. (Please refer to the “Class Attendance” policy in the Saint Paul School of Theology catalog.) Any absence from class will lower your class participation grade, but serious extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor. Class participation means that you have completed all reading and writing assignments for the day, not that you have understood all that you read or that your work is perfect. Good class preparation means that you have come to class prepared to ask questions, to engage the topic of the day, and to think critically about writing. Students have an opportunity to submit a class participation self-evaluation as part of the final grade. The Class Participation Self-Evaluation (attached to the syllabus) is due December 14. If the self-evaluation is late or not submitted, the instructor’s class participation grade stands alone as the grade for class participation in the course.

2. *Reading Log.* Each student is required to select three theological texts from the required reading list. The options reflect an interest in exposing each student to diverse theological perspectives. Guided by the key words lists from the course schedule, the student should read from the selected theological texts in order to explore the systematic development of doctrines within each author's thought. Students are expected to read entire sections of texts related to the assigned doctrines. At the end of the course, students are required to submit an annotated reading log that uses the following format to list and annotate each reading:

Doctrine	
Author	
Title	
Pages Numbers Read	
Two or three sentences describing the historical review or unique theological contribution of the author in the selected reading	
Date Annotation was Completed by Student	
Total Pages Read during the Semester	

The end of the reading list should ***include a tally of total pages read during the semester.*** The assignment grade is based on appropriateness of page selections, quality of annotations, and amount of reading completed during the semester. Note that 750-1500 pages of reading are typical for all Saint Paul courses. The reading log, which should be 7-10 pages, is due December 14, but the assignment should be in progress beginning the first week of class so that students are prepared for the written assignments.

3. *Written assignments.* Students will complete two take-home, open-book essay exams during the semester. Questions are distributed in advance, and students select three of six questions to answer. Essays should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Total pages for each essay should be 7-10 pages. Students must use footnotes or endnotes to cite sources used in answering the questions, which signals that each essay must engage reading assignments in detail. All essays should be based on reading assignments, but classroom lectures and discussions may also inform the essays. The first written assignment is due October 5 (flex date: October 12). The second written assignment is due November 30 (flex date: December 7).

Grading

Class Participation	_____%	[Percentages are determined by consensus of students and instructor during the first class meeting.]
Self-Evaluation	_____%	
Professor	_____%	
Reading Log	_____%	
First Written Assignment	_____%	
Second Written Assignment	_____%	

The course is graded according to the grading system described in the current Saint Paul School of Theology catalog and handbook.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to abide by institutional guidelines regarding class attendance, integrity of work, and student conduct. If you are unfamiliar with these guidelines, consult the current catalog and handbook. The professor reserves the option of failing students strictly for failure to attend class (including regular absences from part of class). A single instance of plagiarism may also result in failure.

Professor's Responsibilities

My job is to teach with integrity the scholarship representative of my field, to see that students learn as much as possible, and to create a comfortable environment for learning. These goals cannot be accomplished without genuine attention to the unique strengths, experiences, and expectations that both the professor and students bring to the classroom. My goal is to provide encouragement and support for your learning. Sometimes flexible procedures and learning options are necessary to facilitate the kind of teaching and learning that should occur here. I am anxious to hear what energizes you, what disappoints you, where you disagree, and what helps you to learn. PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

Learning-Disabling Conditions

It is the Saint Paul faculty commitment to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate-level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities) should contact the instructor and the Office of Student and Community Life) immediately to discuss learning needs, alternatives that have worked for the student in the past, and mutually accountable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and evaluation in the course.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Please see me whether the accommodations you need are long-term or short-term.

Criteria for Evaluating Course Work

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work:

1. ***Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources.*** Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. ***Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions.*** Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.
3. ***Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas.*** Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly reporting what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition of others' ideas to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. ***Flawless grammar, spelling, and form.*** Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

Name _____ Semester _____

Please evaluate yourself in the following categories. Circle the number that best describes your class participation if 1 is excellent, 2 is very good, 3 is average, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is poor.

Preparation

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| I have conscientiously attempted reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have reflected seriously on reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have worked to bring depth to comments and questions by preparing more than superficially for class. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I prepared written assignments on time and when the syllabus required them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes before submitting papers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Class

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| I have attended class regularly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have contributed to class discussions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| When I talked in class, I remained focused on the topic of class discussion. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have listened respectfully to comments and questions raised by other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I brought my questions to class or to the professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I expressed disagreement constructively. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have shared my responsibilities for successful class sessions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I supported other students' efforts to improve their writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Attitude

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I have remained involved and engaged in the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have been constructive in relationships with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I put extra effort into the course – such as study groups/partners, library research, extra reading or writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

I assign myself the following letter grade: _____

Please submit any additional reflections on class participation that should affect your grade in writing on the back of this page. This worksheet is intended to assist you in thinking about the quality of your participation in class. Any interpretations, additions, or connections of criteria should be included in your additional reflections.