

Introduction to Theological Thinking
Th 4322 Spring, 2010

I. Course: Th 4322 Instructor: Michael Weed office 476-2772 home 837-5441
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II. Course Description

This course is an introduction to the nature and tasks of Christian theology in the life of the church. Attention will be given to select doctrines to illustrate the manner and methods of Christian theological reflection.

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the nature, tasks, and language of Christian reflection upon the Christian faith, i.e., theology. After examining the general tasks of Christian theology, special attention will be given to foundational issues and doctrines of the Christian faith. Time permitting, the course will conclude with an examination of a central theological problem or issue.

The course has three primary objectives: 1) students will develop an appreciation for the necessity [and risks] of theological reflection in the life of the church; 2) students will learn basic terminology of Christian theology; 3) students will develop an appreciation for the importance of select doctrines in the work of Christian theology.

Course Goals. Students will learn to articulate the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith with reference to emphases of major theological traditions within the Christian movement. Students will also formulate a philosophy of ministry that relates foundational theological perspectives of the practice of Christian ministry.

Course Objectives. Students will 1) recognize major events in the history of the Christian movement; 2) will identify significant persons in the history of the Christian Movement and their importance in shaping the history of the church; 3) will discuss the lasting influences of different developments emerging within the history of the church; 4) will relate major events and persons in the history of the church to the broader social/cultural context of western history, e.g., Greek intellectual culture, Italian Renaissance.

III. Required Texts

Who Needs Theology, Grenz & Olson
A Handbook of Theological Terms, Van A. Harvey

IV. Course Outline

A. Introduction

B. Theology

1. Defining theology: negative images
2. The necessity of theology
3. The context of theology
4. The tasks of theology
5. The resources or formative factors
6. "Divisions" of theology
7. Risks of Theology (Thielicke)
8. Ministers as theologians
9. Theology today

C. Foundational Christian Beliefs

1. Revelation/Scripture
2. God
3. Creation
4. Creature
5. Estrangement/ Sin
6. Salvation
7. Person and Work of Christ
8. Church
9. Eschatology

D. A Central theological problem, or issue.

V. Requirements and Grading

- A. Regular class attendance is required. [Tardiness and excessive absences will lower students grade.]
- B. Read text and other assigned readings as assigned.
- C. Demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the material covered in text and lectures on three quizzes.
- D. Write an interactive review of Grenz & Olson's Who Needs Theology
- E. Grades will be based upon students' performance on the following: 3 quizzes will count 25% each, the review will count 25%. Over two absences and excessive tardies may reduce final grade.

VI. Theological Terms

Apologetics	Millennialism
Arianism	Modernism
Arminianism	Natural Law
Atonement	Natural Theology
Catholic	Neo-Reformed Theology
Christology	
Church	<hr/>
Conscience	Ontological Proof
Consubstantiation	Pantheism
Covenant	Parousia
	Pelagianism
Creation	Perfection, Christian
Deism	Predestination
Demythologization	Process Theology
Determinism	Proofs for the Existence of God
Docetism	Providence
Dogma	Religious a priori
Empiricism	Resurrection
Epistemology	Revelation
Eschatology	Sacrament
Ethics	Sanctification
Ethics, Social	Sin, Original
Eucharist	Social Gospel
	Soteriology
<hr/>	Spirit, Holy Spirit
Existentialism	Theodicy
Faith	Theology
Foreknowledge	Transubstantiation
Form Criticism	Trinity
Fundamentalism	Vocation
Gnosticism	
God	
Grace	
Heilsgeschichte	
Hermeneutics	
Homoousion	
Image of God	
Inspiration, Bible	
Justification	
Kerygma	
Law and Gospel	
Liberal	
Protestantism	