

Sacra Doctrina: An Introduction to Christian Theology
TH6301
Austin Graduate School of Theology

6-24 June 2011

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Office Hours by Appointment

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the nature, tasks and language of Christian theology in the life of the church. After providing some initial definitions, we will turn to examine the nature of revealed knowledge and the basic content of the tradition of spiritual knowledge passed down through the scriptures and expounded by the church through the ages. We will give special attention to primary Christian doctrines including: the doctrine of God in its characteristic doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of creation (with theological anthropology as a key subdivision of creation theology), the doctrine of sin, the doctrines of redemption through the Son's incarnation and his work of atonement. Finally, we will consider the character of the Christian life, the new community called church and God's promise of a world made right.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will develop an appreciation of the necessity, risks and various modes of theological reflection in the life of the church.
- Students will develop a deeper understanding of the relation between theological reflection and personal spiritual development in the life of a disciple.
- Students will critically and charitably interact with a representative selection of classic theological texts, thereby gaining facility in reading and evaluating substantial theological texts from different times and traditions.
- Students will be able to define and properly employ a core of about 100 key theological terms.
- Students will be capable of discoursing on central doctrines of the Christian faith (Trinity, Creation, Sin, Christ, Church, etc...) with clarity, precision and grace.

Course Requirements and Mean of Evaluation:

- Full preparation, attendance and participation in class are mandatory. More than one **absence or excessive tardiness may result in a deduction of up to 10% from your final grade.**
- Each student will read and critically review *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*, by Ellen Charry before the first day of class on 6 June 2011. The **book review will comprise 15% of your final grade.**
 - The written review should not exceed 10 pages.
 - The review must reflect the thorough conceptual analysis characteristic of level 3 reading as described in Mortimer Jerome Adler and Charles

Lincoln Van Doren. 1972. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Please demonstrate understanding of the book, through summarizing and analyzing its contents, before elaborating your personal assessment. Remember, it is a mark of spiritual maturity to be ‘quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger’ (James 1:19). The same is true of theological work in the church.
- Students will memorize the attached list of theological terms as described by Van Harvey and be ready to reproduce his definitions in summary form.
- Three examinations will be administered. The first two will be fact oriented and brief, consisting mostly of short answers and definitions. These serve to monitor the classes comprehension of the material as it is being delivered and thus allow midstream adjustments. The final will be comprehensive and include essay questions whereby the student can demonstrate not only retention but also understanding.
 - The first exam will be taken at the end of class on 10 June 2011 and will cover the first section of definitions from Van Harvey and the lecture content of the first week of class. **This exam will comprise 20% of your final grade.**
 - The second exam will be the most abbreviated, covering only the second section of definitions from Van Harvey, and will be taken at the beginning of class on 20 June 2011. **This exam will comprise 20% of your final grade.**
 - The final exam will be offered on 24 June 2011 (or perhaps on the following day or weekday if the class as a whole so consents). The exam will cover the content of the lectures, the required readings and the final portion of Van Harvey’s definitions. Essay questions will be designed to allow students to display integrative understanding of entire course contents. **The final exam will comprise 20% of your final grade.**
- Each student will produce a research paper, not to exceed 12 pages, on a theological topic approved by the instructor. This paper will submitted by 31 August 2011 at the latest. **The research paper will comprise 25% of your final grade.**

Required Texts:

- *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, Van A. Harvey
- *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*, Ellen Charry
- *Christian Doctrine*, Shirley C. Guthrie (Focus on Chapters: 3-8, 10-13, 16-18)
- Supplementary Readings are listed below in conjunction with the course section to which they relate.

Schematic Overview:

- Prolegomena: The Nature and Reliability of Spiritual Knowledge
(Supplementary Readings: Origen, *On First Principles*, prologue; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Pt.1, Q.1, Art. 1-10; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1.1-5; Karl Barth,

The Word of God and the Word of Man, ch. 2)

- What is Theology?: Definition, Tasks and Overview of the Discipline
 - The *Sensus Divinitatis*: Why Knowledge of God's Existence is Universal
 - Obediential Knowledge: Why Knowledge of God's Character is Rare
 - Learning to Inhabit Scripture: Seeking 'the Face of God for Now'
- From Everlasting to Everlasting: The Triune God and God's Kingdom
(Supplementary Readings: *Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds*, Wilken, *Remembering the Christian Past*, ch. 4; Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. vol. 1, ch. 4)
 - The Mystery and the Economy: The Doctrine of God in Two Parts
 - God witnesses to God: Being and Character in God's Self-Revelation
 - Thinking What Cannot Be Imagined: The Mystery of God's Life as Three in One
- In the Beginning: Creation as the Christian Point of Departure
(Supplementary Readings: Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*, 5.3-7; 5.12; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1.15; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 202-231)
 - The Theater of Redemption: The Mystery of God's Intentions Undergirding Creation
 - Human Beings *ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei*: Communicative Co-Dominion and our Destiny with God
 - Renewed to the Image: New Testament and Patristic Developments in the *Imago Dei*
- Roots of Ruin: Sin and Human Perversion
(Supplementary Readings: Augustine, *Confessions*, book 2; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature of Man*, ch. 7 and ch. 8, section 3)
 - "You will be like God knowing...": Image of God and the Mental Roots of Sin
 - Flesh and Soulful Existence: From Twisted Thinking to Sin in our Members
- The Economy of Redemption: God's Project in History
(Supplementary Readings: Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*; Augustine, Sermons 227, 228B; *The Chalcedonian Definition*; Aaron Preston, 'Redeeming Moral Formation: The Unity of Spiritual and Moral Formation in Willardian Thought', *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 2010 3/2, pp. 206-229; John C. Gibbs, *Moral Development and Reality: Beyond the Theories of Kohlberg and Hoffman*, ch. 8)
 - Presence and Absence: God's Progressive Self-Revelation in History
 - The Mystery of the Incarnation: The Two Natures of Christ and God's Fulfillment of Human Destiny
 - Orienting Soteriology: Assumptions, Issues and Starting Points

- Viewing the Cross from Easter Morning: Making Sense of the Atonement
- Invited and Indwelled: Understanding the New Community Called Church
 - New Character, New Capacities and New Communication: The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church
 - Salvation is a Life: Spiritual Progress as Double Justification or Sanctification?
 - Ongoing Mediation: God's availability in the Church through Water, Bread and Wine
- The World Made Right: God's Project, Human History and Modes of Deathless Life

Select Bibliography for Further Exploration:

- Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Atlanta, Ga: John Knox Press, 1985.
- Allen, Diogenes. *Spiritual Theology: The Theology of Yesterday for Spiritual Help Today*. Cambridge, Mass: Cowley Publications, 1997.
- Chan, Simon. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Conyers, A J. *The Eclipse of Heaven: The Loss of Transcendence and Its Effect on Modern Life*. South Bend, Ind: St. Augustine's Press, 1999.
- Conyers, A J. *The Listening Heart: Vocation and the Crisis of Modern Culture*. Dallas: Spence Pub. Co, 2006.
- Daniélou, Jean. *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964.
- Daniélou, Jean. *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973.
- Daniélou, Jean. *The Origins of Latin Christianity*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977.
- Daniélou, Jean. *Prayer: The Mission of the Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1996.
- Ford, David. *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Grenz, Stanley J, and Roger E. Olson. *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Ladner, Gerhart B. *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984.
- Loder, James E. *The Transforming Moment*. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989.

- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007.
 - McGuckin, John A, and Cyril. *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy : Its History, Theology, and Texts*. Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.
 - McIntosh, Mark A. *Christology from Within: Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs Von Balthasar*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.
 - Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1991.
 - Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985.
 - Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - Smedes, Lewis B. *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union with Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
 - Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
 - Volf, Miroslav. *After Our Likeness: The Church As the Image of the Trinity*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.
 - Wilken, Robert L. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
 - Wilken, Robert L. *Remembering the Christian Past*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1995.
 - Zizioulas, Jean. *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.
 - Zizioulas, Jean, and Paul McPartlan. *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*. London: T & T Clark, 2006.
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