TH 504: Systematic Theology I
Fall Term 2010

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978 646 4235

SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will attempt to answer a number of foundational questions about the nature of theological method and apply those principles in reflecting upon the nature and attributes of God. What is the role of tradition in theology? Does Scripture need an interpretative principle, e.g., tradition, in order to properly function as authority? Is revelation propositional or transformational? Is the continuing work of the Spirit in the church revelatory? What is the place of imagination and creative reconstruction in Evangelical theology? Is classical theism wrongly indebted to a metaphysics of substance? What does a properly biblical understanding of a relational God as Trinity look like?

II. EVALUATION

A. Critical reading notes (or reading report). Each student will provide me with the reading notes covering the required reading (see under Course Content). The notes will not be simple sketches or synopses of the material, but they will have to reflect your critical interaction with it. I require a minimum of 1,000 words for each week with assigned reading. Weighted at 25%. Due by last day of written work.

B. Book critique. Choose a book from among the list of recommended texts and write a critical review of it. The length should be 1,300 words. Other books can be accepted – check with instructor. Weighted at 25%. Due on the last day of written work.

C. A choice between:
   a. Research paper: A list of topics is provided. The length should be 3,000 words. Weighted at 50%. Due on the last day of written work. Students without prior theology experience (or: religious studies, biblical studies, philosophy) are strongly encouraged not to opt for this.
   b. Final exam, multiple choice. The final exam will consist of 100 multiple choice questions, covering the lectures.

A grade must be obtained for each part of the evaluation in order to pass.

III. COURSE CONTENT
WEEK 1: BASIC QUESTIONS IN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY


WEEK 2: THE GREAT TRADITION

Lints 81-139

WEEK 3: REVELATION

Lints 57-81, 259-290; Grenz 132-38.

WEEK 4: INSPIRATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Erickson ch. 9; Grenz 379-404

WEEK 5: FOUNDATIONALISM AND AFTER

Lints 191-259

WEEK 6: THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE AND THE NATURE OF DOCTRINE

Franke 83-163; Erickson ch. 6

WEEK 7: APOSTOLIC AND PATRISTIC TRINITARIAN THOUGHT

Grenz 53-76; Bray 111-185

WEEK 8: TRINITY AND RELATIONALITY

Grenz 77-87; Bray 197-224

WEEK 9: GOD, VIOLENCE, AND JUSTICE

Grenz 88-97; Erickson chs. 12-14.

WEEK 10: OPEN THEISM

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

V. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Baillie, John, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (Columbia, 1956)
- Berkhof, Hendrikus, *Two Hundred Years of Theology* (Eerdmans, 1989)
- Cunningham, David, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Blackwell, 1998)
- Feinberg, John, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Crossway, 2006)
- Frei, Hans W., *Types of Christian Theology* (Yale, 1992)
- Kelsey, David, *The Uses of Scripture* (Fortress, 1975)
- Rahner, Karl, *The Trinity* (Herder & Herder, 1975)
- Tanner, Kathryn, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Fortress, 2001)
• Webster, John, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (CUP, 2003)
• Zizioulas, John, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (St. Vladimir’s, 1995)

VI. NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Please refer to Indiana University’s ‘Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It’ [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml]. The document has the official recognition of Gordon-Conwell faculty.

If you are not sure about specific situations, contact the professor for clarification.