This class is offered as an advanced level discussion of the doctrine of divine attributes reconceived as an interpretation of Trinitarian action. I start from the premise that the traditional treatment of the divine attributes as descriptions of divine substance is potentially sub-Trinitarian. The divine substance does not exist except as hypostasized in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As such, any discussion of the divine attributes must be subordinated to a Trinitarian ontology, contrary to many of the treatments of the divine attributes that one finds in books of systematic theology. The class explores some of the divine attributes reconceived in this Trinitarian register.

Another important component of the class bears on Trinitarian action. Can God be considered a personal agent? Some discussion of personal agency will be brought to bear on this issue. The classic principle of Trinitarian theology which states that the external operations of the Trinity are indivisible (opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa) will be discussed and defended. Its implications for a number of doctrines and conceptions of divine attributes will also be investigated.

Course objectives

1. To consolidate our understanding of the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for systematic theology.
2. To become familiar with a body of recent literature on the doctrine of the Trinity.
3. To demonstrate that a Trinitarian approach reshapes our understanding of the divine attributes.
4. To understand the significance of the doctrine of the unity of external operations for Trinitarian economy.

Learning outcomes

1. The student will arrive at a better understanding of the fundamental concepts and issues in Trinitarian theology
2. The student will be equipped with a hermeneutics of Trinitarian action
3. The student will have an ability to defend a personal conception of God
4. The student will understand and appreciate the practical significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for areas of Christian life and mission.

Seminar schedule [articles and selections to be supplied through CAMS. The list is still somewhat provisional.]
1. On the possibility of speaking about God. The legacy of metaphysics. What are divine attributes?
   a. D. Stephen Long, *Speaking of God*
   b. Kevin Hector, *Theology After Metaphysics*

2. Hermeneutics and divine attributes
   a. K. Scott Oliphint, *God with Us: Divine Condescension and the Attributes of God*
   b. Kevin Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology*
   c. Schwobel, *God: Action and Revelation*

   a. Rahner, *The Trinity*
   b. LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*

4. The unity of external trinitarian operations
   b. Augustine, *Letter XI to Nebridius*, various tractates

5. The doctrine of appropriation
   a. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*
   b. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*
   c. Amos Yong, selection

Reading Week

6. The Trinity and divine simplicity
   b. Stump & Kretzmann, ‘Absolute Simplicity.’
   c. Franks, ‘Simplicity in Barth and Aquinas’

7. Personal agency
   b. Stewart Sutherland, *God, Jesus and Belief* - (selection)

8. Divine action in the world
   a. A. Farrer, *Faith and Speculation*

Reading Week

9. Interpreting Divine Action
   a. Vidu, ‘*Opera trinitatis* and Collective Action’, forthcoming
   c. William J. Abraham, ‘*Divine Action and Analogy*’, PDF.

10. God, time, and providence [No class Friday: Thanksgiving Break]
   a. Stump and Kretzman, ‘Eternity’
   b. Pannenberg, selection.

11. Immutability, impassibility, and atonement
   a. Bruce McCormack, piece on immutability in *Renewing the Evangelical Mission*.
   d. Thomas McCall, *Forsoaken*, selections.
   e. P. T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*

12. Conclusion
   a. No readings

**Required Reading**

3. Augustine, *The Trinity* (CCEL - online); *Epistle 11; Sermon 52*.
6. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae; Summa contra Gentiles* (selections - CAMS)

**Course requirements**

- 10% - attendance.
- 20% - class participation. The student is expected to complete the reading assigned for each class and to participate in the seminar discussion.
- 70% - final research paper. A 5,000 words research paper, to be turned in on the last day of written work. The topic of the paper needs to be approved by the instructor.

**Bibliography**

Abraham, William J. “Divine Action and Analogy” PDF
   <http://myweb.facstaff.wwu.edu/wasserr/Logos/abraham.pdf>

Aquinas, St Thomas. *Summa Theologiae, First Part*. Lander: Aquinas Institute for the
McCall, Thomas H. Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why It Matters. Downers


