

Inhabiting the Christian Drama (xtianstud705). The first semester of a year-long course, taught in the fall semester of 2015 by Paul J. Griffiths at Duke Divinity School. Class meets from 2:30-5pm on Mondays, in 110 Gray, Duke Divinity School. Paul's office is 056 Langford, Duke Divinity School; his email address is pgriffit@gmail.com, and his office hours are from 9-10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment. Teaching assistance is provided by Brett McCarty, a doctoral candidate in Duke's ThD program. He can be contacted for appointments at brett.mccarty@duke.edu.

This is a year-long (two-semester) course, which meets weekly. Its principal purpose is to help you see more deeply into the shape of Christian theological thinking, and to become more skilled at performing it. The first semester proceeds topically, by treating the grammar (the lexicon and syntax) of Christian thinking. The second semester proceeds by close reading of some literary (philosophical, theological, fictional, poetic) classics from the tradition.

If you're taking this course for credit, you'll be expected to

- Read some material each week, according to the schedule given below. All reading should be done and thought about before class time on the day to which it belongs.
- Be prepared to contribute to class discussion of the materials you've read for that week.
- Produce a weekly (excluding the first week) written exercise of 500 words plus or minus 10%, in which you summarize and comment on the reading for that week. We'll say more about the nature of these assignments on the first class day.
- Write two longer assignments, each of 1800 words plus or minus 10%, the first due at the end of September, and the second due at the end of November. We'll say more about the nature of these assignments on the first class day.
- Your grade will be assessed in the following way: 25% for the eleven weekly short written pieces; 25% for each of the longer written pieces; and 25% for performance in class.

### Schedule

24 August: Christianity—an overview and some definitions

- no reading for this week

31 August: Christian Theological Thinking—its topic, purposes, and nature.

- Weil, *Waiting on God*, pp. 105-116
- Griffiths, *Catholic Theology*, §§00-07

7 September: The god of whom Christians speak (1)—the name of the LORD; the contrast between the LORD and everything else.

- Scripture: Exodus 3; Deuteronomy 6; Psalm 95
- Sokolowski, *God of Faith & Reason*, pp. 1-52

14 September: The god of whom Christians speak (2)—the triune LORD: how to think and speak of the LORD as (a) Trinity.

- Scripture: Colossians 1; Romans 8; John 20
- Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, Trinity*, pp. 1-34

21 September: Creation's order (1)—creation *ex nihilo*, the order of things, the fall, the devastation.

- Scripture: Genesis 1-3
- Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, Trinity*, pp. 35-65

28 September: Creation's order (2)—creation's consummation & the healing of creation's devastation

- Scripture: Revelation 20-21 (& recall Romans 8 & Colossians 1)
- Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4.79-97

5 October: The historical order (1)—Babel & Pentecost; Jesus Christ; the transfiguration of death

- Scripture: Genesis 9-17; Acts 2
- Hopkins, 'Wreck of the Deutschland'

12 October: no class (fall break)

19 October: The historical order (2)—Evil & damage as a problem for Christians

- Scripture: Job; John 9
- Hart, *Doors of the Sea*

26 October: The human order—sin & grace (1)

- Scripture: 2 Samuel 11-19; Luke 15
- Sokolowski, *God of Faith & Reason*, pp. 69-153

2 November: The human order—sin & grace (2)

- Scripture: 1 John
- Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, Trinity*, pp. 67-124
- Weil, *Waiting on God*, pp. 137-215

9 November: The political order (1)—Israel and the Church

- Scripture: 1 Samuel 1-12; Acts 1-7
- Pecknold, *Christianity & Politics*, 1-68

16 November: The political order (2)—the Church as polity

- Scripture: John 6; John 14-15; Philippians 1-2
- Pecknold, *Christianity & Politics*, 69-168

23 November: no class (American Academy of Religion meeting)

## Readings

You'll need to have a Bible with you for every class. Bring your preferred English version. If you don't have a preferred version, get and bring the New Revised Standard Version.

- Griffiths, Paul J. *Catholic Theology: What It Is & How To Do It*.
- Hart, David. *The Doors of the Sea*
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'
- Pecknold, Chad. *Christianity and Politics*
- Sokolowski, Robert. *The God of Faith & Reason*
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity*
- Weil, Simone. *Waiting on God*