

Inhabiting the Christian Drama (xtianstud706). This is the second semester of a two-semester course, taught in the spring semester of 2016 by Paul J. Griffiths at Duke Divinity School. Class meets from 2:30-5pm on Mondays, in 110 Gray. Paul's office is 056 Langford, his email address is pgriffit@gmail.com, and you can see him by appointment – please feel free to email him for one. 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 thirteen classics from the tradition. 'Christian classic' here means: (1) A work composed by a Christian with (more-or-less) explicitly Christian purposes; (2) A work with a significant history of reception and use within the broadly Christian world. The works read are drawn from different periods, places, and traditions.

One classic will be the topic for instruction and discussion each week. For each weekly class, other than the first, you'll be expected to have read, before class meets, a specified extract or extracts from the week's work according to the schedule given below. The extract(s) will be relatively short – in no case more than 15K words. Each class will open with a lecture of 45 minutes or so by one or other of the instructors on the work, treating its time, place, occasion, structure, content, reception, theological content & purpose, & so on; and locating the extract(s) read within the work as a whole. The remainder of class will be spent in close analysis of the extract(s) you'll have read for the week. You'll be expected to be prepared for this, & to make oral contribution to it.

In addition to this reading you'll be asked to write, thus:

1. A brief (400 words, plus or minus 10%) weekly piece, to be turned in as an attachment to an email to Paul before the class meeting to which it pertains. In this piece you'll summarize the extract(s) you've read that week, and place what's said in them in the broader context of Christian thought. Where does what I've read this week, you'll be asking yourself as you read, belong in the schema of Christian thought as a whole? There'll be twelve of these short pieces, one for each weekly meeting except the first. Only the best ten of these will contribute to your grade.
2. Two longer (2000 words, plus or minus 10%) pieces, each to be devoted to a longer exposition of one of the works we'll be studying this semester. In these pieces, you'll be expected to offer critical/constructive argument on one or more of the positions taken in the work you're writing about, &/or on the method adopted by the work. For the purposes of these longer written pieces, you should ordinarily read more widely in the work than the brief extract(s) required – perhaps, in the case of shorter works, the whole thing. You can choose which works to treat in this way, & when to write & turn in the pieces. The only constraint is that the first of these pieces must be received by Paul as an email attachment, by, at latest,

Monday 21st March (the Monday after Spring Break), and the second by, at latest, Monday 2nd May.

One third of your grade will be responsive to your oral performance in class, and two-thirds to your written work.

Schedule and Readings

Nine of the works to be studied are available for purchase in Duke Divinity School's bookstore. Those are marked with asterisk in the schedule below. In the other four cases, you'll be provided the text in other ways, & we'll indicate how to locate the reading we're asking you to do along with the provision of the text. Required reading is indicated, where possible, by edition-neutral methods; where not, it's indicated by page numbers of the edition available for purchase. There's also recommended reading for each week, which you're by no means required to do, but which will add to your understanding of the context of each work we'll be studying if you can do it. This reading is taken from: Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York, 2009). Copies of this will be on reserve in Duke Divinity's library.

13 January (Wednesday, because of Duke's MLK schedule; subsequent meetings will all be on Mondays): The Martyrdom of Perpetua & Felicity. Composed in Latin in the late second or early third century. No pre-reading: the text will be provided and analyzed in class, in toto. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 1-111>

25 January (Monday). Athanasius, *On the Incarnation, composed in Greek, mid fourth century. Reading: Sections 1-32, 56-57. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 112-285>

01 February (Monday). Augustine, *Teaching Christianity, composed in Latin, late fourth & early fifth century. Reading: Prologue & Book One. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 289-318>

08 February (Monday). Benedict, *Rule, composed in Latin, mid sixth century. Reading: chapters 1-7, 23-29, 33, 48, 69-73. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 319-395>

15 February (Monday) Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias, composed in Latin, mid twelfth century. Reading: Book One/Vision Two; Book Two/Vision One; Book Three/Vision Three. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 396-423>

22 February (Monday). Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, composed in Latin, mid thirteenth century. Reading: 1.3 (simplicity); 2/2.36 (envy); 3.1 (incarnation). <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 427-547>

29 February (Monday). John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul, composed in Spanish, late sixteenth century. Reading: Book One, chapters 1-2, 12-13; Book Two, chapters 1-2, 9-10, 23. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 655-765>

07 March (Monday). John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, composed in Latin & French, mid sixteenth century. Reading: Book One, Chapters 1-2 (knowledge of God and self; piety and the knowledge of God); Book Two, Chapter 1 (fallen human nature & original sin); Book Three, Chapter 7 (three uses of the law). <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 427-547>

<14 March (Monday), no class – spring break>

21 March (Monday). Blaise Pascal, *Pensées, composed in French, mid seventeenth century. Reading (page numbers from the Oxford World's Classics edition): pp. 12-22 (vanity), 66-73 (disproportion), 152-158 (machine). <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 769-816>

28 March (Monday). Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear & Trembling, composed in Danish, mid nineteenth century. Reading (page numbers from the Princeton edition): Exordium (pp. 9-14), Eulogy on Abraham (pp. 15-23), Problema I: Is there a teleological suspension of the ethical? (pp. 54-67). <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 817-914>

04 April (Monday). Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, composed in German, mid twentieth century. Reading: §59.1, "The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country" – please feel free to skip the material printed in small type. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 967-1016>

11 April (Monday) Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness, composed in English, late twentieth century. Reading: Chapters 1 & 3. <recommended: MacCulloch, pp. 915-966>

18 April (Monday), Gillian Rose, *Love's Work, composed in English, late twentieth century. Reading: Chapters 1-4, 7-8.