

Christian Theology: An Introduction (xtianthe755). Taught at Duke Divinity School in the fall semester of 2015 by Paul J. Griffiths (pgriffit@gmail.com, 056 Langford). Class meets 10-11:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in Westbrook 0016 at Duke Divinity School. Paul will keep office hours from 9-10 am on class days; please use email to make an appointment with him at other times.

This course presents a particular view of the grammar – the lexicon and syntax – of the content of the Christian faith. Its principal purpose is to help students become (more) skilful (than they already are) at thinking (and writing and speaking) Christian-theologically, and in applying such thought to topics not themselves explicitly theological. Its principal device is the display of an instance of Christian-theological thinking in lectures given by the instructor during the course of the semester. These lectures are articulated with required readings from four Christian theologians from different periods, with different ecclesial affiliations, and of different intellectual temperaments; and are supported by small-group discussion and instruction given by the course's preceptors. Students will be asked to show their understanding of and responsiveness to the material given them in lecture and as reading, as well as their skill in thinking theologically; they'll do this orally in the small-group preceptorials, and by way of a variety of writing assignments.

Reading is set by the week, according to the schedule below. It should be completed by 10 am on the Tuesday of the week to which it belongs. You should take it seriously, read it slowly, take notes, and think about it. The instructor will sometimes discuss and elucidate it, or parts of it, in lecture, and it will typically be the central topic for instruction and discussion in precept. All the readings are taken from four theologians: Aurelius Augustinus (354-430), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Karl Barth (1886-1968), and Kathryn Tanner (1957-).

Writing: you'll be expected to write two short papers (2K words $\pm 10\%$, inclusive of everything). The first of these is due your preceptor in your precept session during the week beginning 20 September (weeks, for Christians, begin on Sunday); the second likewise, during your precept of the week beginning 8 November. Length matters: writing to a required length is a skill important to master. Please note at the end of your paper – which you'll give to your preceptor in hardcopy – its number of words (your wordprocessing software makes this easy). If you write long, your preceptor will stop reading when (s)he reaches the upper limit (2200 words), and will grade on what's there to that point. If you write short (less than 1800 words), you'll be docked by half a grade-point for every hundred words short. In the first paper you'll state and elucidate the doctrine of the Trinity as you think it ought be stated and elucidated, addressing, in the course of doing so, the version of the doctrine with which you've found most to disagree in lecture, reading, or precept, from the first three weeks of the course. In the second paper you'll choose two of the Christian-doctrinal nodes – loci, if you like Latin – treated in the course to that point, excluding the Trinity, and show how the two nodes you've chosen relate to one another, and how altering a substantive position within one node has effects upon the formulation of the other.

Attendance: This course has 36 public sessions – 24 plenaries, in which the instructor will lecture; and 12 preceptorials, in which you'll meet in small groups for instruction and discussion with your preceptor. Attendance is recommended but not required at lectures. Every lecture will be recorded (audio and video), and will be available to you within two hours of being delivered. You're encouraged to come to the live lectures; but if you find it preferable to watch and listen to the recordings at another time, please feel free to do that. Attendance at precept, however, is required, ~~and your preceptor will expect you to have heard, seen, and meditated upon all lectures given since your last precept. For example: suppose you have a Monday/Wednesday lecture and a Thursday precept. That means you'll be expected to have heard/seen the lectures from the Monday and Wednesday immediately preceding your precept by the time you attend it. Thus, mutatis mutandis, for whatever your case is.~~ Preceptors will consider your attendance and your apparent knowledge of what's gone on in lecture when they provide your grade, and will explain to you how they'll do that.

Exams: there'll be a one-hour in-class midterm on Thursday 8 October, in which you'll be provided a number of extracts from works read in the course to date, or from what's been said in lecture, and will be asked questions about them of an exegetical, normative, and descriptive kind. There'll also be a two-hour final exam during examination week (day/time tbd), one part of which will treat material covered in the course after 8 October in the same manner as the mid-term did for material covered up to that date; and the other part of which will ask you to write an argued response to one among a number of theological claims. Both these exams are to be handwritten: no computers allowed in the room. If you need special accommodations for medical reasons, please be in touch with your preceptor about this early in the semester.

Quodlibets: 'quodlibet' is Latin for 'what you like' or 'what you will' ('Twelfth Night, or, What You Will'). The last two plenary sessions of the course (11/17, 11/19) will be devoted to quaestiones quodlibetales, which means questions chosen by you on non-theological topics – topics, that is, which don't have explicitly to do with the triune LORD. We might have time to treat five or six such questions. There'll be a procedure for determining which questions will be treated: it'll be explained to you by email and in discussion with your preceptors. The idea is to practice and display theological thinking about non-theological topics.

Grade: 20% for each of the two short papers; 15% for the midterm; 25% for the final; 20% for attendance at and performance in precept.

Preceptors

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Benedict, Jennifer. jlbenedicta@gmail.com

Case, Brendan. — head preceptor. brendan.case@gmail.com

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Fong, Samantha. samantha.fong@duke.edu

Gehring, Stephanie. stephanie.s.gehring@gmail.com

Wickware, Marvin. marvin.wickware@duke.edu

Schedule of topics and readings

All required readings are taken from the following six books:

- Allen, R. Michael. (ed) *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introduction and Reader*. ISBN 978056715219 (paper). <=Allen>
- Bauerschmidt, FC. (ed./transl.) *Holy Teaching: Introducing the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*. ISBN 1587430355 (paper) <=Bauerschmidt>
- Harmless, William. (ed./transl.) *Augustine in His Own Words*. ISBN 9780813217437 (paper) <=Harmless>
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Christ the Key*. ISBN 9780521732772 (paper) <=Tanner/Christ>
- Tanner, Kathryn. *God and Creation in Christian Theology*. ISBN 9780800637378 (paper) <=Tanner/God>
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. ISBN 9780800632939 (paper) <=Tanner/Jesus>

8/25 Theology (discourse about the LORD) (1)

8/27 Theology (discourse about the LORD) (2)

Reading: Allen, 16-27; Tanner/God, 10-35; Bauerschmidt, 31-44

9/1 God (the triune LORD) (1)

9/3 God (the triune LORD) (2)

Reading: Harmless, 274-314; Bauerschmidt, 73-92

9/8 God (the triune LORD) (3)

9/10 God (the triune LORD) (4)

Reading: Allen, 30-41, 58-69; Tanner/Christ, 140-206; Tanner/God, 36-80

9/15 Jesus (the incarnate LORD) (1)

9/17 Jesus (the incarnate LORD) (2)

Reading: Harmless, 128-130, 140-145, 191-198, 295; Allen, 73-84, 140-153

9/22 Jesus (the incarnate LORD) (3)

9/24 Jesus (the incarnate LORD) (4)

Reading: Bauerschmidt, 163-186, 223-248; Tanner/Jesus, 1-33

9/29 Spirit (the given LORD) (1)

10/1 Spirit (the given LORD) (2)

Reading: Allen, 174-190; Bauerschmidt, 93-100; Harmless, 250-260

- 10/6 Spirit (the given LORD) (3)
10/8 Midterm examination
Reading: Tanner/Christ, 274-301
- 10/20 Israel/Church (the LORD's community) (1)
10/22 Israel/Church (the LORD's community) (2)
Reading: Harmless, 232-273; Bauerschmidt, 253-284
- 10/27 Israel/Church (the LORD's community) (3)
10/29 Israel/Church (the LORD's community) (4)
Reading: Allen, 192-206; Tanner/Jesus, 67-95
- 11/03 Creation (the LORD's cosmos) (1)
11/05 Creation (the LORD's cosmos) (2)
Reading: Allen, 95-137; Harmless, 201-231
- 11/10 Creation (the LORD's cosmos) (3)
11/12 Creation (the LORD's cosmos) (4)
Reading: Bauerschmidt, 101-106; Tanner/God, 81-119
- 11/17 Quodlibet (1): <td>
11/19 Quodlibet (2): <td>
- 11/24 no class: American Academy of Religion.
- final examination day/time/place tbd.