

Associated Canadian Theological Schools

THS 540: Introduction to Christian Theology

Instructor: Ed Stuckey, DMin
Fall 2008
2 credit hours

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604-513-2044
October 27 – 31, 2008
8:30am-12:30pm

I. Course Description

The basis, purpose and essential language of theology will be presented through an overview of the major theological themes. This will include a brief survey of historical developments within the church as doctrine developed. The place and importance of theology within the life of the church will be emphasized.

II. Aims

This course assumes the complete participation of the student in all communications, readings, and assignments with the desire to grow deeper in their faith. If this is carried through faithfully the following aims should be met:

- a comprehensive understanding of the broad landscape of theology
- the development of some foundational tools enabling students to become independent theological thinkers, able to discern the significance of theology for their life in the church
- an appreciation for the orthodox, evangelical tradition of the church as it comes to expression in the various theologians and theological epochs of the church's history
- an appreciation of the relevance of theological issues to both ministry and to everyday life
- some insights into the current theological milieu both within and outside evangelical boundaries
- a clear understanding of the significance of the Bible as the sole authority and primary source for theology; its inspiration and authority will be seen as central to the theological task
- the development of a rapport with the instructor and fellow students that fosters prayerful and joyful theological discovery

III. Denominational Distinctives

Because ACTS is a co-operative effort of 6 different denominational groups each student is encouraged to possess a copy of his own denomination statement of faith and use it as a guide in thinking about and developing their own approach to Christian doctrine.

IV. Texts

A reliable English translation of the Bible (not a paraphrase) is an indispensable text in any theology course. NIV, TNIV, NLT, ESV, NASV, (N)RSV or TEV are all acceptable.

Primary Texts:

Erickson, Millard *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 2nd ed. A. Hustad, ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Erickson, Millard *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

McGrath, Alister *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, 4th ed. Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

Recommended text:

McGrath, Alister, ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*, 3rd ed. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

Supplementary texts are listed in the bibliography provided in each of the above texts.

V. Course Requirements

A. Readings Value 30%

Students are to provide evidence of personal interaction with the readings by completing the study questions which appear at the beginning of each chapter in Erickson’s, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. These questions are to be answered briefly in point form, capturing the essence of what the text is saying, yet clear enough to be understandable apart from the text.

Due: Please post e-copy to the Workspace on the course website (www.ecourses.twu.ca) no later than 11:59 pm on the following schedule:

- Section 1 of ReadingsMonday, September 29**
- Section 2 of Readings.....Monday, October 6**
- Section 3 of Readings.....Monday, October 13**
- Section 4 of Readings.....Monday, October 20**
- Section 5 of Readings.....Monday, October 27**

Assigned readings must be completed prior to our first day in class on campus. ***Because of the***

length of the readings, and the need for some extended “reflection time,” the student is expected to complete all the readings prior to the commencement of the course.

- The textbooks are to be read following the outline of *readings* listed in the *Course Outline and Readings* [see below].
- A note about *The Christian Theology Reader* [hereafter TCTR]: This recommended resource is an anthology that introduces you to key texts by notable theologians. Take the time to carefully read the *introduction* to each text; then the *text* as well as the *comment* which follows and especially as you work to prepare your essay.
- The resource, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, is to be consulted during the course of the student’s readings. Students are encouraged to make generous use of this tool.

B. Personal Journal: Value 20%

Due: Please post e-copy to the Workspace on the course website (www.ecourses.twu.ca) no later than 11:59 pm on the following schedule:

- Section 1 of ReadingsMonday, September 29**
- Section 2 of Readings.....Monday, October 6**
- Section 3 of Readings.....Monday, October 13**
- Section 4 of Readings.....Monday, October 20**
- Section 5 of Readings.....Monday, October 27**

Below is a series of 5 personal journal questions assigned for your personal evaluation of each day’s readings. Each class day will consist of 2 sessions with various readings assigned for each. The journal questions are to be answered based upon the readings for each day.

Each student will prepare 5 journal entries of approximately 2 pages for each day of readings. A total of 10 pages.

- Your journal reflections on each of these questions should be about 1/2 page, typed double-spaced, Arial font, 10-12 pt using Microsoft Word.
- Evaluation will be based on the extent of your thoughtful interaction with the material, whether or not you actually answer the questions below, **and especially your original insights in relation to the issues raised by it.**
- **It is imperative that the student be prompt in completing these assignments. Your success in this course depends on this.**

Personal Journal Questions

1. What have I learned from my reading that has clarified my faith for me?
2. What have I learned from my reading that has confused me somewhat?
3. What have I learned from my reading that has implications for ministry?
4. What have I learned from my reading that seems superfluous?
5. Anything else?

C. Essay: Value 30%

Due: Please post to the website on or before Friday, November 30, 2007.

The student will write a 12-15 page essay on a topic of interest relating to the material covered in

class or in the texts. Possible topics will be discussed during the class and **should be confirmed via e-mail with the instructor before proceeding**. The paper should show some ability to grasp and discuss a major theological theme in light of the class lectures, the texts and some further research into contemporary literature on the subject. Topics can include a theological theme, movement, theologian or theological tradition, but must be narrow enough to provide sufficient focus in developing one's theological acumen. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writer's*, 6th ed. All versions of Microsoft Word 97 and up use this as a template for theses and term papers so we recommend this software to you.

D. Exam: Value 20%

Please post e-copy to the Workspace on the course website (www.ecourses.twu.ca) by

Tuesday, October 29, 2007.

A take home final exam will be given to students on the final day of class. This will be completed and returned to the instructor on the course website.

Grading of Course

Pre-requisite courses for ACTS are graded on a **pass/fail basis. The passing grade is 60% and**

above. The grading will be based on the marking and grade interpretation guide for written assignments found below.

Letter Grade	Quality Characteristics
A 90-100%	<p>Outstanding, excellent work: gives evidence of an extensive and detailed knowledge base; exceptional performance with strong evidence of original thinking, good organization, meticulous concern for documented evidence, and obvious capacity to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, discern, justify, and elaborate; frequent evidence of both verbal eloquence and perceptive insight in written expression; a clear authorial voice demonstrated by a strong introduction, a well-defined thesis, an effective body, and a summative conclusion; effective variety in sentence type, length, and structure; demonstrated masterful grasp of subject matter and its implications; is in compliance with Kate L. Turabian's <i>A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations</i> (6th ed).</p>
B 75-89%	<p>Good, competent work: laudable performance with evidence of some original thinking; careful organization, with well-developed writing plan; satisfactory critical and analytical capacity; reasonably error-free expository written expression, with clear, focused thesis and well-supported, documented, relevant arguments; good problem-solving ability; reasonably good grasp of subject matter, but an occasional lack of depth of discernment; evidence of reasonable familiarity with course subject matter, including both concepts and key issues; exhibits a serious, responsible engagement with the course content; presence of minor errors which do not detract significantly from the clarity of communication.</p>
C	<p>Minimally acceptable work: relatively weak performance with infrequent</p>

60-74%	evidence of original thinking or ability to analyze or synthesize course material; nominal or weak problem-solving ability; uninspiring written expression with problems in mechanics, syntax and format; written expression frequently exhibits difficulty in articulating an outline, central thesis, or sustaining a coherent argument; sentence fragments, limited or inaccurate word choice; paragraphs inadequately developed; little evidence that work has been proofread; ideas are sometimes trite or juvenile; weak in provision of documented, illustrative, or descriptive evidence; shows inadequate grasp of some basic elements of the course; presence of many grammatical and stylistic errors which detract significantly from the clarity of communication.
F	Inadequate work: poor performance that indicates a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of essential subject matter; seems easily distracted by irrelevant tangents; written expression is poorly organized, often incoherent, and rife with syntax and diction errors; serious patterns of faults in writing; shows little evidence of even basic competency in the course content or skills; evidence of plagiarism.

VI. Contacting the Instructors

You can reach the instructor in the following ways:

Dr. Ed Stuckey

estuckey@journeycentre.ca

I will also be available following each day's sessions.

NOTE: This course assumes that **all** students have access to a computer. All written assignments should be in Microsoft Word 97 or better. The instructor cannot be responsible for delays and/or problems associated with incompatibility or memory capacity.

VII. Course Outline and Readings

This course will meet on campus over a 5 day period: Monday, October 27th – Friday, October 31st. Two sessions will be held each morning from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. It will be assumed that students have completed their readings and are prepared to listen and interact with the lectures.

Monday, October 27

Theology and Revelation

session 1 The Task of Theology; The What, How & Why of Theology

session 2 Revelation, Natural Theology, Bible

Tuesday, October 28

Doctrine of God

session 1 Person of God

session 2 Work of God

Wednesday, October 29th

Christology

session 1 The Person of Christ

session 2 The Work of Christ

Thursday, October 30th

session 1 Humanity: creation and image of God

Humanity: the fall (sin)

session 2 Salvation Applied

Friday, October 31st

session 1 *The Holy Spirit: his person & work*

The Church: nature, governance, life

session 2 *The Last Things*

Summary of REQUIRED Reading Assignments:

Erickson, Millard *Introducing Christian Doctrine*

McGrath, Alister *Christian Theology: An Introduction*

Due Date	Subject	Erickson	McGrath
September 29	Theology & Revelation	Chapters 1-8	Chapters 1-8
October 6	Person & Work of God	Chapters 9-17	Chapters 9-10
October 13	Person & Work of Christ	Chapters 24-28	Chapters 11-12
October 20	Man, Sin & Salvation	Chapters 18-23, 31-35	Chapters 13, 14, 17
October 27	Holy Spirit, Church & Eschatology	Chapters 29-30, 36-42	Chapters 15-16, 18

Summary of Recommended Reading Assignments (not required):McGrath, Alister *The Christian Theology Reader*

Due Date	Subject	McGrath – Reader
September 29	Theology & Revelation	xx-xxxiii; 1.1-8; 1.24; 1.26; 1:28 2.7; 2.9-10; 2.16-18
October 6	Person & Work of God	3.13; 3.28
October 13	Person & Work of Christ	4.1; 4.6-7; 4.9; 4.17; 4.34; 4.41; 5.1; 5.5; 5.7-8; 5.23; 5.28; 5.33
October 20	Man, Sin & Salvation	6.2; 6.12-15; 6.32-34; 6.36; 6.38-39; 6.51-52; 9.6-9; 9.12
October 27	Holy Spirit, Church & Eschatology	3.17; 7.1-3; 7.5; 7.7; 7.24; 8.17-18; 8.26; 10.13; 10.15; 10.17; 10.19; 10.21; 10.23-24

Quick Summary of REQUIRED reading (Table 1 above):ALL OF ERICKSON'S *Introducing Christian Theology*ALL OF MCGRATH'S *Christian Theology: An Introduction***RECOMMENDED reading:**All of McGrath's *The Christian Theology Reader*

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/ethics/Main.asp>. Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.