

Associated Canadian Theological Schools

THS 671: Systematic Theology I:

The God Who Creates, Sustains and Redeems

Instructor: Brian Cooper, Ph.D.

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Term: Fall 2008

Credit: 3 hours

Time: Wednesdays, 8:30-11:10 a.m., Sept. 10th –Dec. 3rd.

Location: tba

Prerequisites: THS 540; THS 571; preferably, you should have both.

I. Course Description

This course is a study which begins to unfold the Bible's story of creation, fall, and redemption. This course begins with the existence and nature of God, especially focussing on God's action in creation and providence. Discussion then moves to consideration of the person of God the Redeemer and the nature of human beings as creatures and sinners.

II. Course Aims

By the conclusion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. describe the nature of theology, its role and importance in the life of the individual Christian and of the church as a whole;
2. summarize the main points of the classic Trinitarian Christian doctrines of God, the person of Christ, and humanity;
3. discuss important theological issues which arise in relation to these doctrines, together with significant historical and contemporary contextual perspectives on those issues and key biblical concepts which apply to them;
4. discuss methodological principles and practical techniques for answering theological questions and developing systems of theology in an Evangelical Christian framework;
5. apply these principles and techniques in his/her own personal doctrinal reflection and efforts at theological problem-solving;
6. discuss practical ways in which good Christian theological understanding of these issues may impact the church's life and ministry.

III. Required Texts

1. Bloesch, Donald G. *God the Almighty*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995.
2. Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
3. Anderson, Ray S. *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982.

4. Stone, Howard W., and Duke, James O. *How to Think Theologically* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
5. McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Christian Theology Reader* (3rd ed.). Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

IV. Recommended Texts

1. McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
2. Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998. Or another equivalent one-volume systematic theology.

V. Course Requirements

1. *Reading*: All three texts are required reading throughout the duration of the course, as assigned. There will also be some short readings each week, for the purposes of class and group discussions. The course requires approximately 1000 pages of text readings plus further research for the paper. Much of your learning in this course will depend upon careful, disciplined reading of assigned texts. **Two two-page summary/reviews, one for Kärkkäinen's *Christology* and one for Anderson's *On Being Human*, should be submitted at the end of the term, December 3th, 2008. Value: 20%.**
2. *Short Essay*: The purpose of this assignment is to give the student an opportunity for an extended engagement with the first text, *God the Almighty*, especially in light of the methodological issues raised in *How to Think Theologically*. Students should consult the Syllabus Supplement for expectations on what such an extended review should consist of. A general rule is that it should be two thirds summary and one third critical evaluation. It should be 8-10 pages in length (no longer), and typed using 10-12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced on 8.5x 11 paper. **This assignment is due Wednesday, October 15th, 2008. Value: 30%.**
3. *Research Paper*: Students will produce a research paper of not less than 15 and not more than 20 pages in length. It is to be typed using 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writer's*, 7th ed. The paper should demonstrate a clear understanding of the doctrine under discussion. It should also seek to establish, by weight of evidence from the Scriptures and secondary sources, a thesis statement in relation to the doctrine under discussion. Again, refer to the Syllabus Supplement for expectations on the shape and format of a research paper. There you will find a list of possible subjects and bibliographic resources to get you started. You can request further guidance from me if you require it. **This assignment is due Wednesday, November 28th, 2008. Value: 40%.**
4. *Class Attendance & Participation*: Because Christian theological reflection is a discipline in which we engage in isolation, I will expect you not only to show up for class but also to contribute to class discussions. **Value: 10%.**

VI. Course Outline and Reading Schedule

Sept 10 — Introductory Matters. Theology, Embedded Theology, and Theological Method.
Reading: Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapters 1-4, 8-9. Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapter 1.

Sept. 17 — Who IS God? Identity and Self-Revelation.
Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapters 2-4.

Sept. 24 — Living with Tensions: More on God's Being and Attributes
Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapters 5-6

Oct. 1 — Three and Yet One: The Mystery of the Trinity
Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapter 7.

Oct. 8 — Christian Theology in Biblical and Historical Perspective
Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapters 8-9.

Oct. 15 — Who Do You Say That I Am?: The Christ of Scripture and Creed
Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 1-5. Stone & Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapter 5.

Oct. 22 — Historical Developments in Christology
Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 6-10.

Oct. 29 — Reading Week: No Class

Nov. 5 — Dead White Guys and Jesus: Modern Western Christologies
Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 11-20

Nov. 12 — Contextualized Christologies
Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 21-30.

Nov. 19 — "I'm Only Human": Defining Theological Anthropology
Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 1-5, Appendix A.

Nov. 26 — Fleshing Out Humanity: The *Imago Dei* and Other Implications of Being Human
Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 6-10, Appendix B.

Dec. 3 — From the Textbook to the Church: Sin, Personhood, and Vocation
Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 11-13.
Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapters 6-7.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

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 Honesty

A fundamental expectation, grounded in biblical ethics, for anyone involved in academic work at ACTS is that he/she practice academic honesty. Students must become familiar with, and adhere to, the principles and requirements associated with academic honesty. 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.

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.