

Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University

THS 540: Introduction to Theology

Ryan Klassen, PhD (Cand)
Spring 2019
2 credit hours

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Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm
Fosmark Centre, Room TBA

I. Course Description

This foundational course assists the student in gaining an overall orientation to the purpose and language of theology. The specific themes of systematic theology will be surveyed, with a focus on the impact of the church throughout history on the development of doctrine. The importance of theology in the life of the local church will be emphasized.

II. Objectives

By the end of this course, each student should:

- Be able to articulate a solid understanding of the historical developments in the Christian theological tradition.
- Show competence in using foundational theological tools, articulate the sweep of major Christian doctrines, and describe their significance for life in the church.
- Express knowledge of and appreciation for the theological tradition of the church as it comes to expression in the various theologians and periods of the church's history.
- Demonstrate insight into the contemporary theological scene, especially of the global evangelical community.
- Understand the relationship between biblical authority and the authorities of tradition, experience, and theological imagination in the community's discernment of theological direction.
- Develop a rapport with the instructor and fellow students that fosters joyful theological discovery and an appreciation for the various expressions of faith present in the classroom.

III. Course Textbooks

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (6th ed). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.

McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Christian Theology Reader* (5th ed). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

Bring your Bible to class, please. Feel free to use your preferred version, but note that the version you use for this course should be a translation, not a paraphrase.

Because ACTS is a co-operative effort of four different denominational schools, with even more denominations represented in the student body, each student is encouraged to possess a copy of her/his own denominational confession of faith or doctrinal statement and use it as a guide in thinking about and developing their own approach to Christian doctrine.

IV. Course Assignments

A. Reading (20%) and Presentations (30%)

1. Weekly Readings from *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (20%) – The weekly reading is preparation for the class – you will get much more out of our classroom discussion if you have read the assigned reading. At the beginning of each class, you will submit a reading report on the assigned reading. This report should be a **MAXIMUM** of one page. It can be less. Highlight something you learned or something that stood out, and highlight one question you have about the reading. Be prepared to share from your report in class. This assignment is not marked for content – simple submission guarantees full marks.

2. Presentations on *The Christian Theology Reader* (30%) – You will sign up to make two presentations to the class on the weekly assigned reading from *The Christian Theology Reader*. A major element of graduate-level study is interacting with primary sources. This is your opportunity to read excerpts from some of the most significant, influential (and controversial) Christian theologians throughout history. Your presentation should include:
 - A short background locating the theologian in the history of the Christian tradition (i.e. who is this theologian and where do they fit in the Christian tradition?)
 - A short summary of the essential message of the excerpt
 - Your answers to the Questions for Study
 - An evaluation/application of the issue from within your own tradition (i.e. how does this connect with my theological tradition – strengthen, challenge, contradict – and what application can I draw from this reading?)

MAXIMUM four pages.

B. Critical Research Paper on the nature, role, and expression of theology (40%)

You will write a research paper (8-10 pages) reflecting on one theological issue of interest to you in your Christian life and ministry. Submit your proposed topic before Reading Week.

The purpose of this paper is to help you reflect critically on how historical theological developments continue to shape contemporary Christian life and ministry, and to demonstrate your awareness of the Christian theological tradition. Put another way, show me how theology (past and present) matters! Your paper should contain four main elements:

- o A thesis statement which clearly and concisely articulates the point you intend to argue in your paper.
- o A synopsis of the theological issues at play, the priorities inherent in the different options, strengths and weaknesses of each, and the implications for Christian life and ministry.
- o Historical examples of each – the positions, including their origins and outcomes (take advantage of *The Christian Theology Reader*).
- o Your conclusion, anticipating objections to your arguments and exploration of specific application to your personal life and ministry.

This paper is due on April 2, 2019. This is a formal research paper, so we are concerned about bibliography as proper footnotes. The paper should be written in good, clear prose, cleanly edited and properly and consistently formatted according to Turabian style (see below for more information).

C. Class Participation (10%)

This course will work best if all students participate, by preparing prior to class, by paying attention to the presentations of fellow students and the professor, and by contributing questions and discussion throughout the course. Such participation in your own learning and your contribution to the learning of your classmates is factored into your final mark.

Assignment weight (%)

Reading Reviews	20%
Presentations	30%
Critical Research Paper	40%
Class Participation	10%
Total:	100%

Late Assignments will be penalized as follows:

- Reduction by 5% of assignment value for each (working) day after due date. (Assignments due at class time are considered late after midnight on the date due).
- No late assignments will be accepted after April 17, 2018.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Blew my mind	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Competent	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Marginal	1.70
F	Inadequate	0.00

V. Miscellaneous Notes/Policies

Do your work before you come to class. I will come expecting that you have read the assigned pages beforehand (and making the reading reports due before the class is designed to motivate you to do just that). If you don't, you'll look foolish when I ask you questions. I love interaction, and think that people learn better when more than one person talks.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Excerpts to read in Christian Theology Reader	Chapters to read in Christian Theology: An Introduction
January 9	Course Introduction		
January 15	What is Theology and Where Does it Come From?	1.3, 1.4, 1.10, 1.20, 1.24, 1.25, 1.31, 1.32, 1.34, 1.36, 1.38 (22 pages)	1, 5-6 (68 pages)
January 22	Sources and Methods	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.15, 2.18, 2.22, 2.32, 2.37, 2.39, 2.42, 2.43, 2.44, 2.45, 2.46, 2.47, 2.50 (31 pages)	2, 7-8 (54 pages)
January 29	How Did We Get Here?	7.8, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.13, 7.15, 7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.24, 7.27 (16 pages)	3-4 (43 pages)
February 5	God	3.1, 3.3, 3.7, 3.9, 3.12, 3.14, 3.17, 3.19, 3.23, 3.25, 3.27, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.32, 3.33, 3.38, 3.40, 3.41, 3.42 (32 pages)	9, 13 (59 pages)
February 12	Jesus	4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.23, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.33, 4.35, 4.36 (33 pages)	10 (39 pages)
February 19	The Spirit	3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.15, 3.16, 8.10 (7 pages)	12 (19 pages)
February 26	Reading Week – No Class		
March 5	Humans, Salvation and Sin I	5..1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, 5.17, 5.19, 5.20, 5.23, 5.28, 5.29, 5.31, 5.32, 5.34, 5.36, 5.37, 5.38 (36 pages)	11 (34 pages)

March 12	Humans, Salvation and Sin II	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.15, 6.17, 6.18, 6.23, 6.24, 6.26, 6.27, 6.31, 6.33, 6.35, 6.39, 6.40, 6.41 (31 pages)	14 (27 pages)
March 19	No Class		
March 26	The Church	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9, 7.14, 7.25, 7.28, 7.30, 7.33, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.15, 8.16, 8.18, 8.19, 8.21, 8.22, 8.23, 8.25, 8.26, 8.29, 8.31, 8.32 (42 pages)	15-16 (51 pages)
April 2	The World	2.28, 2.51, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 6.14, 6.16, 9.1, 9.5, 9.6, 9.8, 9.15, 10.2 (21 pages)	17 (21 pages)
April 9	The End is Only the Beginning	10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.9, 10.11, 10.12, 10.14, 10.16, 10.18, 10.19, 10.20, 10.22, 10.23, 10.24, 10.25 (21 pages)	18 (23 pages)

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

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

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 or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University’s campus closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University’s website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at 11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CanIL courses. Please refer to the TWU Citations Style Guides page (https://www8.twu.ca/library/style_guides.html) for information on different styles.

Students are strongly encouraged to use RefWorks (available through the library home page <https://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://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or <https://www.macmillanlearning.com/catalog/static/bsm/hacker/resdoc/home.htm>. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 7th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 6th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

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

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian") or <http://www.citationmachine.net/>.

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

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important aspect of improving teaching outcomes and for students and faculty professional development. Therefore, completion of course evaluations are considered a course expectation. Professors will schedule time to fill out the online course evaluation (20-30 minutes) during their last scheduled class of the semester, for students to complete on their personal laptop or a collegium computer. Students who are absent or otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation in the last class, will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

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 <https://www.twu.ca/research/research-services/research-ethics>

Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. 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 2016-17 Student Handbook, pp. 48-50). 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.actsseminaries.com) at the following link: <http://www.actsseminaries.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ACTS-Catalogue-2014-15-Final-14-10-03.pdf>.

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:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10ujmBKDRdb53SZ3XHRoXJF6M52Uhu-kr2CV8l654XeA/edit#slide=id.p4>

http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism_Spectrum_US_8.5x11.pdf

<https://prezi.com/dcbl-pnzuv9i/whats-the-big-deal-about-plagiarism/>

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.