

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study Program
Term One | July 8 – July 18, 2019

CS-522 Theology in the Contemporary Church
Faculty: Dr. James R. Noland
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Goals:

This course covers significant individuals, movements, events, and theological developments from the nineteenth century to the present. Students will read selected primary sources.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origins and theological tenets of liberalism from the early 19th century to the present, including its influence on ecumenism and process theology.
2. Understand and distinguish reactions to liberalism, including Fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Evangelicalism.
3. Understand the historical development and theology of the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.
4. Understand the origins and tenets of Liberation and Contextual theologies.

Study Questions 2019

Texts:

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding
Caputo, What Would Jesus Deconstruct?
Ed. Miller and Stanley Grenz, Introduction to Contemporary Theologies
Timothy Keller, The Reason for God

Books are available through the Wesley Amazon ebookstore. You may also order directly from either Amazon or Cokesbury.

Questions from Faith Seeking Understanding (*each answer should be at least one page*)

Both sets of questions are due on or before the first day of class; July 9, 2019 posted to blackboard. The total number of pages should be 19-20 double spaced with one inch margins in Times New Roman font.

1. Migliore writes about three approaches or “methods” of doing theology. What are they? Assess their strengths and weaknesses.

2. According to Migliore, what is the source of the doctrine of the Trinity? What is the difference between the “economic” and the “immanent” Trinity? Define subordination, modalism, and tritheism. Define the psychological and social analogies of the Trinity.
3. How does the doctrine of the Trinity inform our understanding of creation? How should we understand the relationship between science and theology?
4. What is the theodicy question? How does the gospel narrative address it?
5. How does the concept of “relationship” help to clarify and deepen our understanding of (1) the image of God, and (2) the fallen, sinful nature of humanity?
6. How does the doctrine of the Trinity shed light on the personhood of Jesus Christ? How would you explain the phrase “Jesus died for us?”
7. Chapter nine outlines several contextual theologies. What do these diverse voices have in common? How should the “local” and the “global” be balanced in your view?
8. Name and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the models of the church that Migliore names in chapter eleven.
9. What is Barth’s critique of infant baptism? Assess the argument for and against this practice. In United Methodist theology is Holy Communion an ordinance, a sacrament, or both?
10. In seeking to understand religious pluralism, how might the distinction between revelation and salvation be important? Be sure to define these terms.

From Contemporary Theologies

1. Using chapters one and four, create a dialogue between Barth and Tillich that brings out the differences in their theologies. *(an adequate answer will be two pages)*
2. Using chapters ten and eleven, define and assess Liberation Theology and The Theology of Women’s Experience. What do they have in common? *(again an adequate answer will be two pages)*
3. From chapter five: What does Bonhoeffer mean by the terms "God of the gaps," and "religionless Christianity"? How might these terms relate to fundamentalism? Be sure to define this term as well. *(two pages)*

From Contemporary Theologies (CT) and The Reason for God (RG)

4. Using chapters 2 and 11 (CT) and chapter 10 (RG) explain your understanding of sin. Be sure to include your view of original sin. *(an adequate answer will be two pages)*
5. Using chapter one (RG) and chapter 12 (CT) define religious pluralism. what are the strengths and weaknesses of this view? *(an adequate answer will be at least one page)*

From What Would Jesus Deconstruct? **EXTRA CREDIT** (an adequate answer will be at least two pages)

How does Caputo define “deconstruction”? What does he mean by being “lost”? Caputo deflects criticism that his position entails relativism and that it is nihilistic. Define these terms. Is he successful? Explain.

Grading:

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.

An “A-“ means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.

An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student’s imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer’s opinions than the results of the writer’s analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.

A “C” means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A “C-“ means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

An "F" means the individual needs to see me immediately.

Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due. Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades. We need to talk if an assignment is over 72 hours past due. Please note only two unexcused absences are allowed before grade is lowered one step.

Final course grades are mailed to the student, GBHEM in Nashville and the student's conference representative by September 30. Grades are not posted on-line.

Inclusive Language

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

Academic Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty member have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another students paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
- Using unauthorized material during an examination
- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.