

## North Park Theological Seminary

Fall 2009

**HSTY 6210: Christian Tradition and Mission**

**Prof. Mary Veeneman, Ph.D.**

**Office: 5047 Spaulding Ave. (Christian Life and Thought Building), 2<sup>nd</sup> floor**

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**Office hours: Tue. 9:15-9:45; 11:30-1:15; Thurs. 11:30-1:15 and by appointment**

### **Course Description**

This course is a survey of the great Christian thinkers of the West from beginnings to post-modernity. Focus will be placed on distinctly Western forms of Christian thought in the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions with some attention to the Anabaptist and Evangelical Covenant Communities. The course will also cover emerging feminist and underrepresented theologies and the growth of Christianity in the non-Western world.

### **Required Readings**

Required readings will be drawn from the books listed below. Students need to bring the assigned readings to class each day. Failure to do so will negatively impact the participation grade.

Braaten, Carl and Jenson, Robert, eds., *The Catholicity of the Reformation*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Noll, Mark, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Placher, William, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983.

Williams, D.H., ed. *The Early Church and the Free Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Course Reader (Available in the NPU bookstore)

### **Course Objectives for Students**

1. To engage in the critical analysis of texts.
2. To understand the importance of historical theological understanding as a foundation for theological work.
3. To understand the trajectory of Western theology in its historical context.
4. To consider the debates that resulted in classic formulations of Western theology.
5. To understand the role of historical theology in the life of both the church and the individual reader.
6. To understand how historical theology informs civic and communal engagement.

### **Course Outline**

*New Testament and Early Christianity*

8/27 Introduction to Course and Syllabus

*The Beginnings of Christianity – Gnosticism and its Opponents*

9/3 Placher – Chapters 3 and 4  
Irenaeus *Against Heresies*  
The Gospel of Thomas  
Autobiographical Sketch Due

*Tertullian*

9/10 Placher – Chapter 5  
Tertullian – On Prescription Against Heretics  
Early Church Fathers on Women  
Excerpts from Elizabeth Clark’s *Women in the Early Church*

*The Trinitarian and Christological Controversies*

9/17 Placher – Chapter 6  
Arius – *Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia*  
*The Nicene Creed*  
Pope Leo I – *The Tome of Leo*

*Augustine*

9/24 Placher – Chapter 8  
Augustine – *The Teacher*  
Pelagius – “The Letter to Demetrias”  
Augustine – “The Grace of Christ and Original Sin”  
*Williams Book Review Due*

*The Early Middle Ages*

10/1 Placher – Chapter 9  
Paschasius Radbertus – “The Lord’s Body and Blood”  
Ratramnus of Corbie – “Christ’s Body and Blood”

*The High Middle Ages*

10/8 Placher – Chapter 10  
Anselm – Why God Became Man  
Aquinas – The Five Ways

*The Late Middle Ages*

10/15 Placher – Chapter 11  
Julian of Norwich – Revelations of Divine Love

*The Lutheran and Radical Reformations*

10/22 Luther – “The Freedom of a Christian”  
Placher – Chapter 12

*The Catholic Reformation*

- 10/29 Placher – Chapter 13  
Council of Trent – Decree Concerning Justification  
Loyola – Spiritual Exercises  
*Braaten and Jenson Book Review Due*

*Calvin and the English Reformation*

- 11/5 Placher – Chapter 14  
The 39 Articles  
The Canons of the Synod of Dort

*Theology During the Enlightenment and Theology in the United States (to 1865)*

- 11/12 Placher – Chapter 15  
John Wesley – On Christian Perfection  
Placher – Chapter 16  
Jonathan Edwards – A Divine and Supernatural Light

*The Nineteenth Century*

- 11/19 Placher – Chapter 17  
Adolph von Harnack – What is Christianity?

11/26 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

*The Twentieth Century*

- 12/3 Placher – Chapter 18  
Karl Rahner – Foundations of Christian Faith “on God”  
Gustavo Gutierrez – “Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith”  
Elizabeth Johnson – “To Speak Rightly of God”  
*Noll Book Review Due*

12/11 Final Exam

**Grading**

All grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale:

- 93 A Excellent. Demonstrates outstanding, honors-level work.  
90 A- Excellent work.  
87 B+ Very Good. Demonstrates a high level of performance.  
83 B Good. Demonstrates above average level of performance.  
80 B- Good. Still above average  
77 C+ Demonstrates competence. Average level of performance.  
73 C Satisfactory. Demonstrates acceptable level of performance.  
70 C- Minimally acceptable performance.  
60 D Passing but unsatisfactory. Below average performance.  
59-0 F Failure. Demonstrates incompetence: inferior performance.

The following grading standards provide further guidance for your written work.

- “A” work: (1) Responds fully to the assignment; (2) Expresses its purpose clearly and convincingly; (3) Is directed toward and meets the needs of a defined audience; (4) Begins and ends effectively; (5) Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details; (6) Is well-organized and unified; (7) Uses appropriate, direct language; (8) Correctly acknowledges and documents sources; (9) Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format; and (10) Maintains a level of excellence throughout and shows originality and creativity in realizing (1) through (7)
- “B” work: Realizes (1) through (9) fully and completely—and demonstrates overall technical excellence—but often shows little or no original insight or creativity.
- “C” work: Realizes (1) through (9) adequately—and demonstrates overall competence—but contains a few, relatively minor errors or flaws. A “C” paper may show great capacity and originality, but those qualities don’t make up for poor or careless writing. A “C” paper usually looks and reads like it would benefit from some additional drafts or research.
- “D” work: Fails to realize some elements of (1) through (9) adequately—and contains many serious errors or flaws, and usually many minor ones, as well. A “D” paper often looks and reads like a first or second draft.
- “F” work: Fails to realize several elements of (1) through (9) adequately—and contains many serious errors or flaws, and usually many minor ones, as well. An “F” paper looks and reads like a first draft written the day before the paper was due.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Course Grade**

1. Participation (30%)
2. Midterm (20%)
3. Paper (20%)
4. Presentation (10%)
5. Final exam (20%)

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive promptly and well-prepared, and to conduct themselves respectfully in their interaction with class members. Your attendance will be marked when your name is called. If you are not present when your name is called, you will be marked absent. Please remember to turn off your cell phones before

the beginning of class.

### **Laptop Policy**

Laptops may not be used during student presentations or class discussions.

### **Participation Grade**

Part of the participation grade will be based on discussion of the readings on Blackboard prior to class. Please see sheet listed “Elements of Your Participation Grade” attached to this syllabus and available on Blackboard under “Course Information.”

### **Academic Honesty**

North Park University’s policies on academic integrity regarding issues of plagiarism and cheating will be strictly enforced. All written assignments (other than papers) must be submitted electronically via email. All papers must be submitted digitally via Blackboard’s SafeAssign. Please note that any instance of plagiarism or cheating is sufficient reason for a grade of “F” for the course

### **Late Work**

Please note that late work will not be accepted. Missed exams due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up. All papers must be submitted to Blackboard’s SafeAssign by 11:59 pm on the day due to receive credit.

### **Papers**

One 12-14 page paper with an original topic crafted by the student will be required for the course. Papers are to be double-spaced, using 12-point font, with regular 1-inch margins on the top, bottom and sides. Citations are to follow the Chicago Manual of Style. Students will offer a 5-10 minute presentation to the class on their topic on a corresponding date on the syllabus (i.e. students writing on the ancient church will present earlier in the semester than students writing on the Reformation). A thesis statement and bibliography will be due on the day of the presentation via email. The written paper will be due one week after the presentation date. If you need an extension, you may have one additional week to work on it, but after two weeks, the paper will receive no credit. **Additional paper guidelines will be posted on Blackboard in the “Course Documents” section.**

In addition to the research paper, three four-page book reviews will be required. Each book review will cover one of the assigned books (ANC BOOK, Braaten and Jenson, Noll). For each review, you should spend one page giving a brief overview of the book and then three pages offering a critical interaction with the book. The critical interaction should include a consideration of the ways in which what you have learned from the book can be connected to other course material and positive and negative critiques. Due dates for these reviews are listed in the course schedule.

### **Examinations**

As preparation for the midterm and the final exam, students should review all reading assignments and lectures. The final exam is comprehensive, though its emphasis will be

on the material studied after the midterm.

**Communication**

Students are strongly encouraged to be in communication with me regarding any questions or concerns about the course. Please do this early. It is much easier to address concerns about a grade in September or October than it is to do so in late November. By late in the semester, much of the grade is already determined. For your own privacy, please do not make inquiries about your grade after class, but rather email me or come see me in the office.

## **Elements of Your Participation Grade**

Your participation grade is based on several things:

- Unannounced quizzes (which may be frequent or infrequent)
- Attendance
- Active involvement in class discussion (both as one who speaks and one who listens)
- Posting on Blackboard

## **Blackboard**

In order to help you prepare for in class discussion and to write your papers, you need to post in the Blackboard discussion forum once per class period. The day you are responsible for doing this will be assigned during the first session of class. There will be a forum in Blackboard for each day of class and it will be labeled with the date of the class and the names of the assigned authors. Make sure you post in the correct forum. These postings will be taken into account when calculating your participation grade; failure to do them satisfactorily will negatively affect your grade. Late postings will receive no credit. If you attempt to log in to Blackboard and have problems, or if you log into Blackboard and have problems accessing the necessary forum, you are responsible to email me your posting right away and open a help desk ticket with Distributed Learning so that the problem can be resolved.

1-2 students will be assigned to open the discussion on Blackboard. They will write a longer post as a word document that they will attach to their post. In this document, they will give a one page single-spaced interaction with the reading for the assigned day that raises and discusses two key points and then poses two questions for discussion. This is due by 11:59 pm on the Monday before the assigned class period.

All other students must reply to the preliminary posts by 10 am Wednesday morning by offering a short 1-2 paragraph statement that will respond to the questions posed in the original post and raise at least one additional question. These posts will form the basis for a discussion.