Christian Theology
Theo 6330
North Park Theological Seminary

Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, Professor
Fall Semester Online Course, 2011

Instructor Information:

Location- Nyvall 1st Floor (off Olsson Lounge)
Contact- mclifton-soderstrom@northpark.edu; 773-750-9971
*I prefer email for contact. In emergency cases, call the above cell phone number.
Online Hours- I will be active in class on Fridays, and am available for phone or email conversation by appointment.

Course Description

An introduction to the doctrines, methods and tasks of Christian theology, seeking active appropriation of Christian faith in the context of the church and in engagement with the world. History prerequisite.

Course Objectives

- Students will become familiar with basic Christian doctrine in its historical development and systematic embodiment
- To practice the tools, texts and tasks of Christian theology
- To engage in both formal and informal theological conversation, allowing students to explore and deepen their participation in the faith of the church
- To connect clearly the necessity of theology to the life, ministry and mission of the church, and to grasp the theological dimension of students' various callings
- To investigate the relationship of theology and culture, including clarification of the way cultural processes of production and meaning affect Christian identity
- To generate knowledge and love of God, to empower faithful service, and to articulate hopeful witness

Course Texts

The following authors will be our fellow disciples and conversation partners this semester.

1. Bible, NRSV

2. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958). ISBN: 0024021504.

3. Justo González and Zaida Maldonado Pérez, *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Abingdon Press, 2002). ISBN 0687095735

4. Donald Frisk, *Covenant Affirmations* (Covenant Publications, 2003).
This book must be ordered through Covenant Publications:
http://covbookstore.stores.yahoo.net/covafthisweb.html

5. Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge, 2010). ISBN: 0521732778

6. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (HarperOne, 1989). ISBN: 9780061551826

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation.

Involvement in on-line discussions and completion of on-line tasks, including reading the weekly lecture. Discussions will take place in small groups or large groups and will be asynchronous (class members do not need to be on-line at the same time). For Guidelines on weekly posting, see document below.

2. Essays

Throughout the semester, I will assign 3 essays (see options in document below). These papers will include analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the major themes in the course and the readings. They are approximately 3-4 pages (750-900 words). Questions for each set of essays are on the syllabus AND in weekly folder that they are due (when it is available).

*See calendar for due dates (document below).

3. Final Paper

This paper is a short research paper that will address one question, to be determined in the last four weeks of class. The question should be one that in some way synthesizes the doctrines covered in this course (or another approved doctrine). Examples of questions include: How does Wright's understanding of hope challenge evangelical views of eschatology? How does the doctrine of the incarnation shape the sacramental practices of the church? Etc. The paper will in some way engage the Wright or Tanner book, along with at least 4 other scholarly sources to be included in your bibliography. See rubrics for grading criteria.

Grading

Grading breakdown is as follows:
Class Participation: 20%
Essays: 45% (15% each)
Final Paper: 35%

Computer Requirements:

In order to effectively participate in and successfully complete this course, each participant will need to have access to a computer and a high-speed internet connection. Please visit http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Computer-Services/Network/Minimum-Requirements for information on computer requirements.

It is expected that participants know how to perform basic tasks such as sending email with attachments, creating, editing and saving documents in a file structure, and performing web searches.

Participant Responsibilities:

1. Attendance, presence, and full participation are required for this class. You cannot successfully complete this course without completing the weekly readings and assignments. If you miss more than 3 weeks of posting (which means either neglecting to post OR posting late and receiving a "0"), you will not pass this course.

2. Some assignments will be posted on-line for others to see. You will be asked to comment and provide feedback to one another on your work.

3. Use proper "netiquette" (see *A Guide to Netiquette in Course Information folder in Moodle*).

4. Participants should plan on spending on average 70 hours for the semester for this course.

Course Facilitator Responsibilities:

1. The course facilitator will design the course and learning modules in such a way that students have every opportunity to achieve the learning objectives.

2. The course facilitator will provide reactions to student responses and discussion as appropriate in order to clarify important ideas and concepts.

3. The course facilitator will provide opportunities for group work that will include discussion.

4. The course facilitator will respond to emails within 2 business days of receipt.

5. The course facilitator will read and critically assess students' weekly assignments and provide regular feedback.

Academic Honesty:

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear his/her expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well.

For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University's online catalog.

Support Services:

Please see the Course Information button in your course in Moodle for the Student Support document if you need assistance during your course.

Disabilities Accommodations

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the program's office. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information please review the following website: http://www.northpark.edu/ada