

BIBL 7170: SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

THEME: UNION WITH CHRIST

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fall, 2017

Instructor

Stephen Chester

Study: Nyvall 23

schester@northpark.edu

773-244-6238

Course Aim

The aim is to enable students to explore the theme of union with Christ in Scripture and to reflect on it critically, theologically, and pastorally.

Course Description

This class is held in conjunction with the annual North Park Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture. The class will foster concentrated reflection on the papers presented at the Symposium and allow students to participate more meaningfully in the Symposium event.

This year's symposium focuses on union with Christ. The center of the class will be the three-day seminar (**meeting from 4.15pm on Thursday September 28 to 5pm on Saturday September 30**), which includes the Symposium itself and an additional class session both before and after. Attendance at all sessions is required and reading of the entire symposium materials is assumed.

Course Objectives

By the end of the class, students will be able to:

1. articulate major biblical, historical, and theological issues in the study of union with Christ;
2. engage the theme of union with Christ in the theological interpretation of Scripture, especially in relation to the understanding of salvation;
3. assess potential implications of the theme for understanding the Christian life and the pastoral practice of the church.

Style of Learning

One of the things to be learnt from a symposium class is how to learn. It is intended to develop your skills as a lifelong learner, equipping you to define issues and formulate projects for yourselves so that you can do this beyond your degree program without the support of a class structure. The role of the instructor is therefore not tightly to define the work you will do for the class, but to help you to define that work for yourself. For

this reason, you are encouraged to consult the instructor and it is your responsibility to be in touch and request conversations as necessary. In particular,

- you may contact Professor Chester and arrange for a conversation prior to the symposium about your choice of book for review if you are uncertain about which book to choose;
- you must contact Professor Chester after the symposium and arrange for a conversation about your research paper proposal (see below under Assessments).

Class Requirements

Students will:

1. read **all** the Symposium papers in advance;
2. attend the **entire** Symposium and ask at least one question in a session of their choosing;
3. attend and enter into discussion in the additional classes on September 28 and September 30;
4. participate in an online Discussion Board pursuing questions identified by the class as arising from papers presented at the symposium, and then write a formal post (1000 words) outlining an answer to one of the questions;
5. write a book review of 2000 words of one item of reading on union with Christ from a list provided by the instructor;
6. write a 5000-word research paper choosing from a list of possible projects according to their own interests and vocational goals (see below for details).

In relation to submission deadlines, students should note that while illness and other unforeseen circumstances beyond your control will be regarded sympathetically, poor planning on your part is not a good excuse and failure to communicate with the instructor is not acceptable. **Late submission without good reason and clear communication will result in reduced marks.**

Required Class Texts

- Text selected for book review (from list of works authored by symposium presenters)
- Symposium papers (to be distributed when they are available from the authors)
- Additional personal readings selected by each student for final paper research and writing and approved by the instructor

Grading

Book Review (2000 words)	30%
Discussion Board Post (1000 words)	20%
Research Paper (5000 words)	40%
Class Participation	10%

Assessments

1. **Book Review.** Students will choose one of the following texts written by participants in the symposium:

Cynthia Peters Anderson. *Reclaiming Participation: Christ as God's Life for All* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

Ben Blackwell. *Christosis: Engaging Paul's Soteriology with his Patristic Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

Constantine Campbell. *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012)

Julie Canlis. *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

Michael Gorman. *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

Grant Macaskill. *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Thate, Michael J (Editor); Vanhoozer, Kevin J (Editor); Campbell, Constantine R (Editor). *In Christ in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

Olli Pekka-Vainio, *Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

The volume "In Christ in Paul" is large, with 20 essays. If you choose this volume, you can select 10 of the essays. These 10 must include the introductory chapter by Vanhoozer, must include at least one chapter from each of the three parts of the book, and must include the chapters by participants in the symposium (C. Campbell, Macaskill, Gorman, Blackwell, Canlis, Chester, Varma)

Students will select their book ahead of the symposium and begin reading. You do not have to write the review prior to the symposium itself, but you will be asked in class to identify a key question or questions that arise for you. The book review (2000 words) is due on **Monday November 6**. Your review should cover the following questions:

- *What kind of approach is being taken to the study of union with Christ? Is the book primarily biblical, historical, or theological?*
- *Who are the author's principal dialog partners? How does the author situate his or her own work in relation to previous work?*
- *How is union with Christ being defined and understood? What part does union with Christ play in salvation? What do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument?*

- *What implications might there be for understanding the Christian life and for the pastoral practice of the church?*

2. Discussion Board Post

In our de-brief session at the conclusion of the Symposium (after the worship service on Saturday afternoon) we will identify some of the papers presented for further discussion and talk about the questions we wish to pursue. The instructor will immediately post these questions on the Discussion Board on Canvas. By **Monday October 16** each student will contribute at least ONCE to discussion of at least TWO of the papers. Students will then choose ONE of the discussions and write a more formal submission (1000 words) detailing their answer to the question. This must be posted by **Monday November 6**.

3. Research Paper

Students may choose from the following:

- a theological exegesis of one or more scriptural passages on union with Christ
- a tracing of the theme of union with Christ in a single biblical book
- an analysis of the history of interpretation and influence of a biblical passage dealing with union with Christ
- an analysis and interpretation of relevant passages that appear in the Revised Common Lectionary
- a comparison of biblical commentary, theological reflection or sermons on the theme of union with Christ by two major theologians (e.g. Luther and Calvin, or Edwards and Wesley)
- a detailed examination and evaluation of the understanding of union with Christ and its biblical basis held by one major theologian
- a series of sermons on union with Christ
- a proposal for a biblically-grounded understanding of union with Christ for a specific cultural context

These options are meant to stimulate student imagination rather than limit possibilities. Students are welcome to propose other writing projects for instructor approval. A form on which to submit proposals appears at the end of this syllabus. The form must be submitted by **Monday October 16**. Professor Chester will be available in the week beginning October 16 to discuss your proposals, either in person or by phone. The paper is due on **Friday December 15**.

OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Students are reminded of the regulations concerning Plagiarism and Cheating, which can be found in the Academic Catalog. Do not be tempted to plagiarize as a way out of difficulties in completing your assignments. If in difficulty, speak to the instructor.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park's Safe Community site for contact information and further details. <http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community>

ACCOMMODATIONS

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook.

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BIBL6262 SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF CONVERSION
2017: UNION WITH CHRIST
Proposal for Research Paper (Proposal Due: October 16, 2017)

STUDENT'S NAME:

PROPOSED TOPIC/TITLE

PROPOSED INDICATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY/PAPER

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENTS

Signature of Instructor..... Date.....