

## Associated Canadian Theological Schools

### THS 671: Systematic Theology I

#### The God Who Creates, Sustains and Redeems

Brian Cooper, Ph.D.  
Fall 2017  
3 credit hours  
Prerequisites: THS 540; THS 571; preferably both.

briancooper@mbseminary.ca  
Phone: (604) 513-2133  
Mondays, 6:00-9:40 pm  
In a room in Fosmark

### **I. Course Description**

This course is a study which begins to unfold the Bible's story of creation, fall, and redemption. This course begins with the existence and nature of God, especially focusing on God's action in creation and providence. Discussion then moves to consideration of the person of God the Redeemer and the nature of human beings as creatures and sinners.

### **II. Objectives**

By the conclusion of this course, a student should be able to:

- §describe how theology shapes our understanding of the human condition and the life and ministry of the individual Christian and of the church as a whole;
- §articulate the main points of the classic Trinitarian Christian convictions regarding God, the person of Christ, and humanity in a way that is helpful for understanding Christian discipleship and mission;
- §explain important theological issues which arise in relation to these convictions, together with key biblical texts from which they arise as well as significant historical and contemporary contextual examples which illustrate them;
- §develop robust methodological processes and practical techniques for answering theological questions and developing coherent systems of theology in an Evangelical Christian framework;
- §apply these principles and techniques through theological reflection and problem-solving in the context of the student's ministry setting.

### **III. Course Textbooks**

Bloesch, Donald G. *God the Almighty*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

Anderson, Ray S. *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010.

Stone, Howard W., and Duke, James O. *How to Think Theologically* (3rd ed.). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. (The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition will also work just fine.)

McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Christian Theology Reader* (5th ed.). Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 2017.

#### **IV. Recommended Texts**

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998. Or another equivalent one-volume systematic theology.

#### **V. Course Assignments**

*1. Reading:* All three texts are required reading throughout the duration of the course, as assigned. There will also be some short readings each week, for the purposes of class and group discussions. The course requires approximately 1000 pages of text readings plus further research for the paper. Much of your learning in this course will depend upon careful, disciplined reading of assigned texts. **Two two-page summary/reviews, one for Kärkkäinen's *Christology* and one for Anderson's *On Being Human*, should be submitted at the end of the term, December 4th, 2017. Value: 20%.**

*2. Short Essay:* The purpose of this assignment is to give the student an opportunity for an extended engagement with the first text, *God the Almighty*, especially in light of the methodological issues raised in *How to Think Theologically*. A general rule is that it should be two thirds summary and one third critical evaluation. It should be 8-10 pages in length (no longer), and typed using 10-12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced on 8.5x 11 paper. **This assignment is due Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Value: 30%.**

*3. Research Paper:* Students will produce a research paper of not less than 15 and not more than 20 pages in length. It is to be typed using 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 7th ed. It should demonstrate a clear understanding, and also seek to establish, by weight of evidence from the thoughtful engagement with Scripture and secondary sources, a thesis statement in relation to the topic under discussion. You can request further guidance from me if you require it. **This assignment is due Monday, November 27, 2017. Value: 40%.**

4. *Class Attendance & Participation*: Because Christian theological reflection is a discipline in which we engage in isolation, I will expect you not only to show up for class but also to contribute to class discussions. No pressure, but I'm tracking this. **Value: 10%**.

#### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES/POLICIES (The fine print)

1. All written work must be type-written, *double-spaced* (with the exception of the Reading Journal) and submitted on clear print on white paper. Font size of the body of the paper must not be less than 11 pt. If possible, I prefer footnotes at the bottom of each page. Bibliographies with complete citations must be attached at the end of each paper.
2. The style guide of choice at ACTS is Turabian (similar to Chicago). Grades **WILL** be reduced if the Turabian style format is not used (take special care with bibliographies and footnotes). Students may find the following websites helpful: <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite7.html> or [www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/)
3. Develop the habit of using inclusive language. Failure to do so in writing or in public speaking is often considered offensive in North America, and it is impossible to publish material without using inclusive language. It is therefore a useful habit to develop during graduate studies.
4. Students are expected to be familiar with the ACTS policy concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism will be treated as a serious offense and **WILL** result in the failure of the specific assignment and possibly also in a failing grade in the course. **EVERY** instance of plagiarism without exception (even minimal plagiarism) **will be reported** both to the registrar and the Academic Committee of ACTS, and will result in a letter included in your permanent student record. Further details about this subject can be found in the ACTS Student Handbook (see section 4:12 in [www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html](http://www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html) and <http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>).
5. Students who use the assistance of tutors must indicate that they have done so, must describe the nature of the assistance, and must include full contact information of the tutor. Failure to disclose the assistance of a tutor will result in the rejection of the assignment. Students will be exempt from this disclosure requirement if they use the TWU Writing Centre.
6. The marks for late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade, and will not be accepted if more than seven days late except in the case of extenuating circumstances.

**GRADE DESCRIPTION CHART**

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

**TENTATIVE CLASS LECTURE and READING SCHEDULE**

September 11, Week 1 — Introductory Matters. Who IS God? Identity and Self-Revelation  
 Reading: Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapters 1-4, 8-9.  
 Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapter 1-4.

September 18, Week 2 — Living with Tensions: More on God's Being and Attributes  
 Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapters 5-6

September 25, Week 3 — Three and Yet One: The Mystery of the Trinity  
 Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapter 7.

October 2, Week 4 — Christian Theology in Biblical and Historical Perspective  
 Reading — Bloesch, *God the Almighty*, chapters 8-9.

October 9 – Thanksgiving Day – No class

October 16, Week 5 — Who Do You Say That I Am?: The Christ of Scripture and Creed  
 Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 1-5. Stone & Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapter 5.

October 23 – Reading Week – No class

October 30, Week 6 — Historical Developments in Christology  
 Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 6-10.

November 6, Week 7 — Dead White Guys and Jesus: Modern Western Christologies  
 Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 11-20

November 13, Week 8 — Contextualized Christologies

Reading — Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*, chapters 21-30.

November 20, Week 9 — “I’m Only Human”: Defining Theological Anthropology

Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 1-5, Appendix A.

November 27, Week 10 — Fleshing Out Humanity: The *Imago Dei* and Other Implications of Being Human

Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 6-10, Appendix B.

December 4, Week 11 — From the Textbook to the Church: Sin, Personhood, and Vocation

Reading — Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*, chapters 11-13. Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, chapters 6-7.

### ***Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS***

**Web Support – Student Portal** <https://www1.twu.ca/services>

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 <http://www.twu.ca/campus/campus-notification.html> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes will be made at 6:00 a.m. and will cover all classes that begin before 1:00 p.m. A second announcement pertaining to classes that begin between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be made at 11:00 a.m. A third announcement pertaining to classes that begin after 5:00 p.m. will be made at 3:00 p.m.

## **Paper Formatting**

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used, and in CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (to create an account or log in, go to: <http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. It is free. The link to EndNote from the library home page provides detailed instructions. Students will need to be aware that it is necessary 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](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html) or [www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/). In EndNote Basic/Web the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, and APA 6th edition. For Turabian, there are two formats – Notes (Bibliography) 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 may be found at the following website: <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable students to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.eturabian.com/turabian/index.html> or <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> (“Chicago” stands for “Turabian”).

CANIL students should consult with their own faculty on specific requirements.

**Please check with your professor to find out which style he/she recommends you use!!**

## **Course Evaluations**

Course evaluations are important for improving teaching outcomes, faculty professional development, and the student learning context. Completion of course evaluations is, therefore, considered to be a course expectation. Professors will schedule time for students to fill out online course evaluations (20-30 minutes) on their personal laptops or a collegium computer during the last scheduled class of the semester. Students who are absent that day or who are otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation during 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 <http://www.twu.ca/research/research/research-ethics/default.html>. 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**

Christian scholars at TWU regard academic integrity to be a core value. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and are required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship. This means that all members of the TWU academic community must avoid all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. ACTS uses the TWU Student Handbook as a guide for our seminary students. Though some features in the handbook are focused on the university's undergraduate population, it provides the essential student life information for ACTS students as well. It can be found online at: <http://www.twu.ca/studenthandbook/>.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource in this regard has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or can be viewed in flash (self-running) tutorials of different lengths:

<http://williambadke.com/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

[http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism\\_Short.swf](http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism_Short.swf) (8 minute flash tutorial)

### **Equity of Access**

Students with disabilities who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and such documentation should include a statement regarding the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined on the TWU website at

<http://twu.ca/life/wellness/learningresources/disabilities-and-equity-of-access/steps-to-attaining-disability-services.html>.

### **Policy Information and Student Concerns**

Information on academic and community life policies and procedures that affect students can be found in the ACTS *Academic Catalogue*, which is available on the ACTS website ([www.actsseminaries.com](http://www.actsseminaries.com)) under the *Academics* tab. Students who wish to communicate concerns or to lodge academic appeals are welcome to contact the appropriate faculty or staff member directly, or to fill out and submit the relevant Concerns & Grievances or Appeals form found on the *Files & Forms* page of the *Current Students* section of the ACTS Website.