ACTS
SEMINARIES

Associated Canadian Theological Schools
of Trinity Western University

THS 571: Systematic Theology I: Theological Method and the Self-Revealing God (Online)
(Please note: Due to Covid 19 conditions this course will be offered as a combined on-line and World Campus course)

Course Instructor Dr. Archie J Spencer   E-mail: archie.spencer@twu.ca
Course Semester Summer 2020   Phone: 604-888-7592-3858
Format: On-Line World Campus   Course Duration: **10 weeks (May 11-July 15)**
3 credit hours

Course Description

This course will focus on the nature, task and initial content of Christian Theology, expounded in a systematic fashion. It will cover such issues as defining theology, establishing its method of procedure and exploring its initial doctrines, namely the doctrine of Revelation, Scripture and the doctrine of the Trinity as *Missio Dei*. Related topics include the Church's theological task and the Trinitarian foundations of its mission.

Objectives

This course seeks to introduce students to the broad outlines of Christian Systematic Theology with the following outcomes:
-   Students will learn the broad outlines of the task of theology as it relates to Christian nurture of the family of faith and Christian witness to the world.
-   Students will become familiar with the historical and biblical content and context out of which Christian doctrines grew.
-   Students will be introduced to the basic dimensions of theological method and a set of definitions that will enable them to navigate the field effectively.
-   Students will begin to develop a passion for effective articulation of the faith as it relates to Christian ministry and witness.
-   Students will be exposed to a mode of Christian thinking that should encourage them to emulate a thoughtful reflection on the Gospel message.
-   Finally, students will be encouraged to think through the significance of the doctrines of Revelation, Scripture and the Trinitarian Being of God in terms of

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their significance for the Church's task their own spiritual development and formation.

Please Note: Our initial meeting will be an on-line gathering on Zoom with subsequent lectures available through the World Campus platform. Access to the course lectures will be established via Moodle links. The initial Zoom meeting on Monday May 11 at 10:00*am* will be just over an hour in duration to go over syllabus and expectations. An invitation to the class will be issued by email and posted on Moodle. We may have one or two meetings subsequent to that arranged by mutual agreement with the students. The majority of the class content will be in an on-line format through Moodle and World campus. Instructions for access will be forwarded to students soon. The course will be 10 weeks in duration, May 11-July 15. *All assignments for the course will need to be posted by their due dates and no later than July 15th.*

Course Texts

Allen Michael, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introduction and Reader*, (New York: T & T Clark International, 2012) PDF Portion to be handed out on-line.

Barth K. "An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28: 16-20". To be handed out as PDF on line.

Grenz Stanley. *Rediscovering the Triune God*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2004)

McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th edition, (London, UK: Blackwells Publishing, 2011, pp. 1-264) **Note:** There are at least 6 editions of this book in print. Any one of them are acceptable as a text but the pagination of required reading, and the reading schedule are based on the 5th edition. *It is up to the student to figure out the reading schedule based on a comparison of any other edition index with the 5th edition.*

Spencer, Archie J. *THS 571 Course notes* (Unpublished and in PDF on-line). **Note:** Students will have access to the course notes on line and are asked not to reproduce these notes or to distribute them to others. Students can print a paper copy if they so chose.

Course Instructional Content

There are a total of 9 sessions in this course that are designed to be covered over a period of 12 weeks. Readings will be apportioned to correspond to each of these sessions. Students are expected to keep pace with the readings and forum discussions for each main topic to be covered.

Session I. Introducing the world of Theology: Definitions, Sources Norms and Method I. Readings: McGrath, pp. 1- 97.

Session II. Sources Norms and Methods of Theology II. Readings: McGrath, pp. 99-151

Session III. The Doctrine of Revelation I: Definitions and General Revelation. Readings: McGrath, pp. 152-170

Session IV. The Doctrine of Revelation II: Special Revelation. The Authority of Scripture. Readings: McGrath, pp. 171-194

Session V A & B. The Doctrine of Revelation and the Church's Theological Task I Reading: M. Allen *Barth Reader*, pp. 15-43.

Session VI. The Church's theological task II Reading: M. Allen *Barth Reader*, pp.

Session VII. The Mission of God: The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Reading: Grenz, *Triune God*, PP. 1-72

Session VIII. The Mission of God and the Great Commission. Reading: Grenz *Triune God*, PP. 117-225 Barth, "An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28: 16-20". To be handed out as PDF on line.

Session IX. God and the Problem of Theology in the 21ˢᵗ Century

Course Assignments

Reviews

All three texts (or designated parts thereof) are required reading throughout the duration of the course, as assigned. The course requires up to but no more than 1500 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. A *four-page* summary/review, one for each of the McGrath and the Grenz texts books, should be submitted in the drop box marked "Reviews" on the Moodle web site for this course, according to the following ***due dates: July 8ᵗʰ, Grenz and July 15ᵗʰ, McGrath. Value: 30%. There will be a video tutorial link on constructing reviews available on Moodle early on in the course.***

Essay

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 Writer's*, 7ᵗʰ ed or later. All versions of *Microsoft Word*, use this as a template for theses and term papers so I recommend this software to you. The paper should demonstrate a clear understanding of the doctrine, and/or methodological principle under discussion. It should also seek to establish, by weight of evidence from the Scriptures and secondary sources, a thesis statement in relation to the doctrine under discussion. Again, refer to the *Syllabus Supplement* for expectations on the shape and format of a research paper. There you will find a list of possible subjects and bibliographic resources to get you started. You can request further guidance from me if you require it. ***Value 40%. This assignment is due on: July 2ⁿᵈ.***

Forum Discussions

Students will be required to participate in 6 on-line forum discussions. These discussions are designed to foster creative discussion and growth in theological understanding and acumen. Students should submit an initial 150-200 word response to the forum in their primary response and should seek to interact with two other posts per forum discussion submitted by classmates. Those can be long or short but not longer than 200 words ordinarily. These forums will be posted to Moodle on a bi-weekly basis throughout the term. ***Value: 30%: Due as per posted date. Each forum interaction is worth 4% with 6% allocated at the end for over-all participation.***

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited

				integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision *or* references and resources not taken fully into account *or* examples are basic or not completely convincing *or* barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Note: This grading rubric is an adaptation of the one used in the MA in Leadership and MA in Educational Leadership programs at TWU.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Office.

Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal

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/conditions for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at 11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

Paper Formatting

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

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (see the tutorial at http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need 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 or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in EndNote the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, 8th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 6th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats –Bibliography and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Bibliography format, not Reference List. The university no longer subscribes to RefWorks.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html.

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/ ("Chicago stands for "Turabian").

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the "student" side. CanIL students can locate this on the CanIL intranet, under the "student" side.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important aspect of improving teaching outcomes and for students and faculty professional development. Therefore, completion of course evaluations are considered a course expectation. Professors will schedule time to fill out the online course evaluation (20-30 minutes) during their last scheduled class of the semester, for students to complete on their personal laptop or a collegium computer. Students who are absent or otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation in 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. 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

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding

all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca).

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self-running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

http://acts.twu.ca/library/plagiarism.ppt
http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism.swf (14 minute flash tutorial)
http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.

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