EMT 1101: Introduction to (Systematic-Constructive) Theology 1 Thursday, 2:00-5:00 pm

Instructor: Natalie Wigg-Stevenson (<u>natalie.wigg@utoronto.ca</u>)

Available by appointment

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Available by appointment

The introductory epitaphs of Mary Daly's, *Beyond God the Father* (revealing not only the systematic, but also the constructive and contextual character of a particular Christian theology):

I want a women's revolution like a lover.
I lust for it, I want so much this freedom,
this end to struggle and fear and lies
we all exhale, that I could die just
with the passionate uttering of that desire.
- ROBIN MORGAN

When you are criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the various systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them.

- ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

Course Description

This course introduces not only the systematic but also the constructive and contextual character of Christian theology. Participants will (1) become further acquainted with the sources, methods, tasks, and traditions of Christian theology; (2) become familiar with important theological themes, especially as they respond to intellectual and social challenges presented by historical contexts; (3) be encouraged to do theology, thinking creatively about faith in a contemporary context. Basic Christian themes considered will include God and creation, evil and providence, the human condition, Jesus Christ and salvation, the Church, and eschatology. Educational methods used include lectures, discussions, journaling, tutorials, and other written assignments.

Course Texts

Most of the required readings for the course are taken from the following books, available at Crux Books, Wycliffe College:

Required:

- Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classic Themes (Fortress, 2005)
- Chris Budden, Following Christ in Invaded Space: Doing Theology on Aboriginal Land (Princeton: Pickwick, 2009)

Highly Recommended:

• Justo González, Essential Theological Terms. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005

Recommended:

• Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, third edition. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014.

Other required and recommended reading will be available on reserve in the Emmanuel College library, accessible online through the library system, or will be distributed online via the Portal.

Intended Learning Outcomes: Students shall be able to...

- 1. Display knowledge of the character of theology as a critical reflection upon the life of faith, including its method, function and purpose as a discipline.
- 2. Identify the dynamics and implications of faith as it is related to the concerns of human existence in the unique context and challenges of today's world.
- 3. Assess the significance of major theological/doctrinal themes in the Christian witness.
- 4. Consider Christian theology in terms of specific issues arising out of diverse cultural contexts, the experiences of oppressed and marginalized people, and the need for global mutuality and peace.
- 5. Recognize and respect the dynamic diversity of theological viewpoints expressed within Christian traditions.
- 6. Exhibit the capacity to participate as a citizen in a theological community:
 - -displaying empathetic and critical thinking in reading, speaking, and writing...
 - -demonstrating initiative in research and critical appraisal of sources used...
 - -communicating responsibly, carefully, and clearly...
 - -framing and developing theological arguments supported with evidence...
 - -showing an awareness of oneself as an interpreter...
 - -exhibiting tolerance for ambiguity while remaining genuinely committed...

Class-Time Format

The basic arrangement of class-time will be lecture-discussion/problem solving activities. The purpose of the lecture-discussions is to clarify and expand the context and substance of the readings to help students integrate the course resources with their own theological understanding and practice. Problem-solving activities are designed to deepen this process of integration. The overall strategy behind this course is to generate critical theological engagement for the twin purposes of enriching our theological imaginations and transforming our theological practices. The pedagogy is intentionally mutual: we teach and learn to, from and with each other. The texts we are reading and writing are members of that learning journey. They have life inasmuch as we integrate them with our own lives, and with the life we create together on Thursday afternoons this winter.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1.	Regular attendance and informed Participation	10%
2.	Pastoral Email Exchanges	25%
4.	Midterm Paper	30%
5.	Research Paper	35%

1. Regular attendance and informed participation.

A class like this one depends on full participation from all students for our shared learning. Participation grades will be determined not by the amount a student speaks, however, but by how their speaking contributes to the classroom culture. Have you read the texts for the day closely, generously, and critically, and are you trying to take us into a deeper understanding of them? Are you listening to, respecting and seeking to engage your colleagues? Are you treating your colleagues courteously, and seeking to help them explore their own ideas and questions? Are you willing to admit what you don't understand and seek the help of your colleagues to find understanding? Good participation does not equate to always being right; good participation demonstrates your desire to contribute to the group's shared exploration and learning.

Opportunities to participate occur not only during classroom time, but also via Blackboard conversations online. Everyone is encouraged to access these forums for conversation. They are also provided as a space in which students who feel less comfortable speaking in class might fulfill their participation requirements.

As is Emmanuel policy, more than three absences will result in loss of course credit.

2. Pastoral Email Exchanges.

Both self-awareness and careful, critical reading are fundamental to the task of allowing the theological thoughts and practices of others to challenge and transform our own. To help facilitate this process, students are asked to do work each week to prepare for and debrief from their experience of the readings on their own before class. These reflections are an opportunity to evaluate theological claims in the readings and examine some of the major themes vis-à-vis the student's own theological judgments. They also provide students with the opportunity to track their own epiphanies – their 'aha moments' – as we move through the course.

Excellent papers will demonstrate engagement with one recommended reading beyond the required readings.

Each email entry requires an act of imagination: you are now in some form of pastoral ministry and you have received an email from someone in your care asking the simple question that is the heading of each week's topic. It would be helpful to imagine yourself in the same pastoral situation for all of your entries and, if possible, for that situation to be the one for which you envision your degree to be the training grounds (e.g., pastor of a church, hospital chaplain, etc...). Please include an additional line in your first entry narrating what your situation is (and if your situation really needs to change over the course of the semester, come and talk with me about it). Your entry then should be comprised of two components, each 225-275 words in length for a total of 450-550 words:

- 1. To be written BEFORE you do the readings: your current response to the question prompt.
- 2. To be written AFTER you do the readings: a follow up email to your correspondent that you imagine opening with a line like, "You know, I've given the email I sent to you the other day some additional thought, and I'd like to add to/amend/revise/take back what I said with the following:...").

Given that these are pastoral emails, they should probably avoid direct citations from or references to the readings. It is best to write them after you've spent some time processing the reading, and without the books open in front of you. The purpose of the assignment is to give you a baseline of your own understanding, and to let you explore one way in which you've integrated the readings for the week with that understanding. You should therefore avoid editing the first email once you have begun reading. And despite the fact that they are emails, please still write them with appropriate grammar and tone (i.e., no "LMAO"). They should be accessible but not colloquial. Use them to explore and construct your own 'pastoral voice.' Also, you should be concise enough that you can explore a particular theological issue in a dense and meaningful way.

Please include a parenthetical at the end of each component of the entry with that component's word count. E.g., "(253)". Entries that either do not meet or exceed the

word count or that do not include the word count will not be accepted. Email entries must be emailed to the professor and GSA by noon on the day of class to count for a grade.

A minimum of five (5) journal entries are required throughout the course of the semester. You may submit one additional entry (in which case the five highest marks will be chosen for averaging) but this is not required. Because you choose the weeks for your submissions, no extensions will be granted for this assignment.

3. 5-6 page Paper (double spaced, times new Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins).

Engaging the required reading **plus at least 1 recommended reading** from any one of course weeks two through seven, describe and evaluate a key theological issue arising from that week's topic/doctrine of focus. Your paper should demonstrate understanding of the historical and contemporary shape to the topic/doctrine while being focused through the lens of a thesis related to the issue you are addressing.

<u>Due any time before February 16th</u>, by the start of class time in which the week of that topic is covered (e.g., if you are writing on "Authority" your paper will be due – by email – by 2pm, January 19th).

Students may not submit an email entry assignment in the same week in which they submit this paper. Papers should not engage any sources beyond those assigned in the syllabus. Papers that do not meet or that exceed the page/format requirement will be returned unmarked. Because you choose which due date for this assignment is best for you, no extensions will be granted.

4. <u>10-12 page Research Paper</u> (double spaced, times new Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins). Students are to choose a doctrine/topic related to the course, and investigate it further through the process of research, analyzing and appraising its significance for historic or contemporary faith in particular engagement with a social and/or pastoral/ministerial practice or concern.

All paper assignments should be clearly organized, substantive in analysis, well documented, critical in scope, thoughtful in assessing materials and making evaluative claims, and prudent in applications. Excellent papers will not simply 'state' but will 'show' and substantiate their case. Based upon an informed consideration of what is at stake, they will provide reasons for claims and back these reasons up with solid evidence while also demonstrating awareness of counter-arguments to these claims.

Students who received a minimum grade of a B+ on their shorter paper may write their final paper on any topic of their choosing. Students who received below a B+ grade are

strongly advised to write on the same topic of their shorter paper, and must receive the professor's permission to do otherwise.

Papers should observe Emmanuel College academic regulations and policies, and note the "Other Qualities Expected of Students" in "The T.S.T. Grading Scale Used at Emmanuel College" for criteria for evaluation of assignments (found in *Handbook of Information for Basic Degree Students*). More information about writing papers can be found at the web site "Writing at the University of Toronto" at www.utoronto.ca/writing/. Turabian style should be used for all citations.

Papers that do not meet or that exceed the page/format requirement will be returned unmarked. **Due any time before 2pm, Thursday April 6**th (1 week after last class).

Specific Policies

<u>Grading</u>: Grades follow the TST grading scheme. See TST web site or BD Handbook. <u>Extensions</u>: Extension approval (only applicable for the final paper) must be obtained by 48 hours before the due date, otherwise paper will receive the standard late policy deduction. Extensions are only granted in emergency situations or for documented accessibility/disability reasons. Computer issues DO NOT qualify as an emergency. <u>Late Assignment Policy</u>: Assignments are late as of 1 minute past their deadline time. Late papers will receive a 1/3 of a letter grade deduction per 24 hour period (or part thereof). E.g., an A- paper handed in 25 hours after the due date will be reduced to a B. <u>Email Assignments</u>: All assignments are to be emailed to the professor and GSA as a Word file attachment from a University of Toronto email account. Graded assignments will be returned by email attachement to the address from which they were sent. You do not need to use blackboard to submit your assignments.

Accessibility and Disability Policy: Students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Office as soon as possible. It takes time to put disability related accommodations in place. The sooner you meet with a Disability Counselor at Accessibility Services, the quicker they can assist you to achieving your learning goals in this course. See the UT web site: http://www.sa.utoronto.ca/details.php?wscid=4.

<u>Technology</u>: Students may use laptop computers or electronic tablets in class for accessing readings and other course related materials. In order to foster the type of attentiveness to each other required to nurture a classroom community, however, the use of cell-phones is prohibited, as is the accessing of email, social media or any other forms of communication that remove us from our capacity to be present to each other. Please silence your cell phone and put it away – do not set it to vibrate. Any emergency or accessibility needs related to technology that are prohibited by these guidelines can be discussed with the professor and accommodations will be made.

--COURSE SCHEDULE--

Readings marked with * are available through Blackboard All recommended readings available through 3-hour course reserve in Emmanuel Library (unless otherwise noted)

Week One--Introductions

(5 Jan)

No readings

Week Two--Theology: "Why does theology even matter today?" (12 Jan) Required Readings:

- *King, "Christian Theology," in Christian Theology, Hodgson and King eds., pp. 1-27
- Budden, Following Jesus in Invaded Space, pp. 1-85
- *Bass, "Practicing Theology in the Congregation" (on blackboard or click here)

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 1
- Tracy "Theological Method" in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- Chopp and Taylor, "Crisis, Hope, and Contemporary Theology" in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- Plantinga Pauw, "Attending to the Gaps between Beliefs and Practices" in *Practicing Theology*, Volf and Bass, eds.
- Tanner, "Theological Reflection and Christian Practices," in *Practicing Theology*
- Volf, "Theology for a Way of Life," in *Practicing Theology*

Week Three--Authority: "But surely the Bible isn't actually true?" (19 Jan) Required Readings:

- *Farley and Hodgson, "Scripture and Tradition" in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds., pp. 61-87.
- *Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians," in Native and Christian: 93-104
- *Rieger, "Context is What Hurts" in *The Reemergence of Liberation Theologies*: 19-28
- *Ruether, "Talking Dirty, Speaking Truth: Indecenting Theology" in *Dancing Theology in Fetish Boots*: 254-267

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 2&3
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Bible, the Global Context, and the Discipleship of Equals," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- Medina, "Rethinking Liberation: Toward a Canadian Latin@ Theology," in *The Reemergence of Liberation Theologies*: 77-88.
- Wigg-Stevenson, "From Proclamation to Conversation" in *Palgrave Communications* (available at: http://www.palgrave-journals.com/articles/palcomms201524)

Week Four--God: "Jesus I get, but God – the guy with the beard in the sky – he just doesn't make any sense to me..." (26 Jan)

Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 1-18 (skim this section)
- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 19-76 "God"
- Budden, Following Jesus in Invaded Space, pp. 91-109

Recommended Readings:

- Gilkey, "God" in Christian Theology, Hodgson and King eds.
- Suchocki, "God, Sexism, and Transformation," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- Burrell, "God, Religious Pluralism, and Dialogic Encounter" in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- *Daly, "After the Death of God the Father" in *Beyond God the Father*
- Vosper, With or Without God (on course reserve)

Week Five--Theological Anthropology: "Aren't we all just the same in God's eyes?" (2 Feb)

Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 77-117 "Human Being"
- *McFague, "Human Beings, Embodiment, and Our Home the Earth," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 7
- David Kelsey, "Human Being," in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- Dawn DeVries, "Creation, Handicappism, and the Community of Differing Abilities," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- *Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," (1960): 110-112 AND *Thelathia "Nikki" Young, "Queering 'The Human Situation'," in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (2012): 126-131.

Week Six--Creation/Fall: "I just don't believe in original sin..." (9 Feb) Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 117-161 "Sin and Evil"
- *Kidwell, Noley and Tinker, "Creation," in A Native American Theology, Pp. 32-51

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 5&6
- Hartt, "Creation and Providence," in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.

- Williams, "Sin and Evil," in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- *Joy Ann McDougall, "Sin No More? A Feminist Re-Visioning of a Christian Theology of Sin," in *Anglican Theological Review* (2006). Pp. 215-235.
- *Patrick Cheng, "Rethinking Sin and Grace for LGBT People Today," in *Sexuality and the Sacred*, Ellison and Douglas eds., pp. 105-118.

Week Seven--Christology: "Jesus was just a really great teacher. Anyone who actually believes he was God is nuts, right?" OR "I want to follow Jesus' example in his life...can't I just skip all that gruesome stuff on the cross? It's so macabre!" (16 Feb)

Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 161-201 "Jesus Christ"
- *Oduyoye, "Jesus Christ," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, Susan Frank Parsons, ed., pp. 151-167.

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 8 (focus on pp. 168-186) & ch. 9
- Lowe, "Christ and Salvation" in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- Pawlikowski, "Christology, Anti-Semitism, and Christian-Jewish Bonding," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- *Brintnall, "Tarantino's Incarnational Theology: *Reservoir Dogs* and Spectacular Violence, "in *CrossCurrents*, Spring 2004. Pp. 66-75.
- *Córdova Quero, "This Body Trans/Forming Me: Indecencies in Transgender/Intersex Bodies, Body Fascism and the Doctrine of the Incarnation," in *Controversies in Body Theology*. Pp. 80-128.

---READING WEEK---

Week Eight--Soteriology: "How can I know that I'm saved?" (2 March) Required Readings:

- *Gorringe, "Atonement" in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*. Pp. 363-376.
- Budden, *Following Jesus in Invaded Space*, ch. 5 "Justice, Order and Humanity" (110-132) and ch. 7 "Reconciliation, Covenant and Treaty" (153-166).

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 8 (focus on pp. 187-204)
- Lowe, "Christ and Salvation" in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Christian Redemption between Colonialism and Pluralism" in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- *Jones, Cartographies of Grace, ch. 4 ("Oppression") and ch. 5 ("Sin: Grace Denied")
- Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology*, ch. 4 ("Jesus Christ: The Recovery of Radical Love"): pp. 69-98.

Week Nine – Ecclesiology: "What's the point in going to church? Wouldn't God rather I just go for brunch with my family? (9 March)

Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 201-238 "Church"
- Budden, Following Jesus in Invaded Space, ch. 6; Pp. 133-152
- *Brown, "Dancing in the *Eros* of Domination and Submission within SM" in *Dancing Theology in Fetish Boots*, pp. 141-152

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 11&12
- Hodgson and Williams, "The Church," in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- Susan Brooks Thistelthwaite and Peter Crafts Hodgson, "The Church, Classism, and Ecclesial Community," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- Cavanaugh, "Church," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, pp. 393-406.
- Cheng, Radical Love, ch. 5 (Holy Spirit: The Return to Radical Love): pp. 99-138.

Week Ten--Pneumatology/Trinity: "I just don't get the Trinity! Can you give me a quick, layman's answer – what is it??" OR "How can I tell when it's the Holy Spirit talking to me, or when it's just my imagination?" (16 March)

Required Readings:

- Jones and Lakeland, Constructive Theology, pp. 239-278 "Spirit"
- *Tanner, "Trinity" in The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology: 319-332

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 4&10
- David B. Burrell, "The Spirit and the Christian Life," in *Christian Theology*, Hodgson and King eds.
- *Soskice, "Trinity and Feminism," in *Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, pp. 135-150.
- *Lacugna, "Living Trinitarian Faith," in *God for Us*
- Cheng, Radical Love, "God: The Sending Forth of Radical Love" pp. 43-68.

Week Eleven--Eschatology: "But doesn't everyone go to Heaven in the end?" Required Readings: (23 March)

- *Braaten, "The Kingdom of God and Life Everlasting" in Christian Theology
- *Kidwell, Noley and Tinker, "Eschatology," in A Native American Theology (149-165)
- *Thomas G. Long, "Imagine There's No Heaven," in Journal for Preachers
- *Thomas Lynch, "The Good Funeral and the Empty Tomb" in *Interpretation*

 *Reklis, "Those Left Behind," in *Christian Century* and/or "Apocalypse Redux" Sojourners (2 short pieces on eschatology and pop culture).

Recommended Readings:

- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, ch. 14
- Catherine Keller, "Eschatology, Ecology and a Green Ecumenacy" in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, Chopp and Taylor, eds.
- *Thomas G. Long, "The Good Funeral" in *Christian Century* (short piece, doesn't count for paper option)
- *Radford Reuther, "Eschatology and Feminism," in Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside

Provisional Bibliography

Systematic/Constructive Theological Works

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Russell, Letty. "Universality and Contextuality." The Ecumenical Review 30 (1979): 23-26.

Song, C. S. *Third–Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian* Settings. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979.

Tan, Jonathan Y. Introducing Asian American Theologies. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008.

Taylor, Mark Kline. *Remembering Esperanza: A Cultural-Political Theology for North American Praxis.*Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990.

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Wells, Harold. "Social Analysis and Theological Method," pp. 204–219 in Harold Wells and Roger Hutchinson, eds., *A Long and Faithful March: "Towards the Christian Revolution," 1930s/1980s.* Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989.

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