Emmanuel College Winter 2017

EMT 1101: Introduction to (Systematic-Constructive) Theology 1

Thursday, 2:00-5:00 pm

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Available by appointment only

Theological understanding is not a theory or invention, something wafted into existence by the theologian's magic wand. It names a dimension of the life of faith itself, the understanding required of faith as it exists in various life contexts....

Edward Farley, from Theologia

From the cowardice that dares not face new truth From the laziness that is contented with half truth From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, Good Lord, deliver [us].

Prayer from Kenya, quoted in James M. Gustafson, *An Examined Faith: The Grace of Self-Doubt*

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. Theological perspectives addressed will include formative and alternative theological traditions. Educational methods used include lectures, discussions, journaling, tutorials, and other written assignments.

Required Course Texts

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

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

Other required and recommended reading will be available on reserve in the Emmanuel College library or 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 time in class will be lecture-discussion. The purpose of the lectures is to introduce, help clarify and expand the context and substance of the readings. Smaller group discussions are designed to provide an interactive and open environment to explore relevant materials. The overall strategy behind this course is to generate critical reflection, so questions, comments, and reflections are welcome at all times.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Class Participation	10%
2. Reading Reflection Journals	25%
4. Midterm Paper	30%
5. Research Paper	35%

- **1.** *Regular attendance and informed participation*. Because discussion is a key part of the class and nurtures an engagement with course materials, your questions and comments are valued and will be a factor in the overall grade. To this end, it is expected that you will have done the readings and be prepared to contribute. As is Emmanuel policy, more than three absences will result in loss of course credit. Formats and guidelines for class participation will be discussed on the first day of class.
- **2.** Reading Reflection Journal. Careful and critical reading is fundamental. To help facilitate this process, students are asked to engage the readings with written reflections that ask questions and comment on the material in a more personal way, drawing out concrete applications and ministry implications. The reflections are an opportunity to evaluate theological claims in the readings, examining some of the major themes vis-àvis the student's own theological judgments. The objective is to engage the reading critically, with a view toward appraising its contextual relevance, intellectual credibility, and Christian appropriateness.
 - The journals should be typed in single space format and be about a page in length. Journal entries must be emailed to the professor and GSA by noon on the day of class to count for a grade.
 - A minimum of four (4) journal entries are required throughout the course of the semester. You may submit one additional entry (in which case the four highest marks will be chosen for averaging) but this is not required.
- 3. 5-6 page Paper (double spaced, times new Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins). Engaging the required reading **plus 1 recommended reading** for that week, describe and evaluate a key theological issue arising from the doctrine of focus. Your paper should demonstrate understanding of the historical and contemporary shape to the doctrine while being focused through the lens of a thesis related to the issue you are addressing.

Due any time before March 23rd, by the start of class time in which the week of that Doctrine is covered (e.g., if you are writing on "Humanity in Theological Perspective" your paper will be due by 2pm, February 16).

Students may not submit a journal entry in the same week in which they submit this paper. Papers should not engage any sources beyond those assigned in the syllabus.

4. Final 10-12 page Research Paper (double spaced, times new Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins). Students are to choose a doctrine or 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.

Students who received a minimum grade of a B+ on their shorter paper may write their final paper on any doctrine of their choosing. Students who received below a B+ grade are strongly advised to write on the same doctrine 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/.

Specific Policies

-Grading: Grades will follow the TST grading scheme. See TST web site or BD Handbook.

-Email assignments: 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 s/he 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.

-Technology:

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 accomodations will be made.

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