

PROVIDENCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Syllabus for TS6201, Scripture & the Triune God—Winter Intersession 2012

Meeting times: Jan 2-6, 9:00-12:00; 1:00-4:00

Professor: Rev. Dr. Tim Perry

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I. Course Description

The first of four interrelated courses in basic Christian doctrine, Scripture & the Triune God aims to introduce students to major topics within the doctrine of Scripture and God. The course seeks to foster a more robust understanding of the Christian confession of the triune God, as well as an increased appreciation for Scripture as the *living* Word of God through which God speaks to form God's people. Students are expected to develop a systematic understanding of the Bible and God, leading to a personal and critical appropriation of such an understanding for pastoral and theological leadership.

II. Course Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, I would like you to:

- become familiar with basic Christian teaching concerning Scripture and God;
- appreciate why a truthful articulation of God is necessary for Christian community and existence;
- learn how to read theological texts, and to express theological concepts both orally and in writing, in order to develop a more robust theological and ministerial imagination;
- acquire competence in theological reflection upon doctrinal themes crucial to the church's self-understanding and witness;
- bring a Christian understanding of God to bear on ministerial issues;
- cultivate skills as a lifelong learner and teacher of theology and reader of Holy Scripture.

III. Course Texts

The following texts *must* be purchased:

Paddison, Angus. *Scripture: A Very Theological Proposal*. London and New York: Continuum, 2009.

Smith, Christian. *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism is not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011.

Swain, Scott R. *Trinity, Revelation and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation*. London and New York: T and T Clark International, 2011.

Torrance, Thomas F. *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons*. Edinburgh and New York: T. and T. Clark, 1996.

The following text is highly recommended for purchase:

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

All texts are available for purchase in the bookstore.

IV. Course Requirements

A. Attendance

“Regular class attendance is required. Absences of 20% for any reason will be reflected in the grading up to and including a failing mark. Excessive absences may prevent a student from enrolling in future courses.” (*Student Handbook*, p. 17) Furthermore, students are expected to do the readings carefully and to participate in class discussions. It is also expected that the student will bring the readings to class as well as a Bible.

B. Pre-Course Work Due: Start of Class, Jan. 2, 2012. Value: 15% each.

Each student will submit a *personal reflection* on the Smith text. The reflection should take a position on the following position-sentence. “Smith helpfully exposes pervasive interpretive pluralism as a problem, but his solution(s) are in fact harmful to good reading of Scripture and careful practice.” The reflection should demonstrate engagement with Smith’s material and draw conclusions based on personal professional or pastoral work. The assignment will be graded not on having found the “right answer” (i.e., it is possible to opine for or against the position-sentence and do well), but on the quality of the argument and depth of reflection in the presentation. The assignment will be 1500-2000 words in length, properly formatted, and conform to SBL/Turabian style standards.

Each Student will compose a critical book review of the Swain text following the IDEA format. 1 *Identify* the author. Why should one trust what he writes? From what basis does s/he make her or his argument? 2 *Describe* the contents of the book. Trace the development of the book’s argument or central claim from beginning to end. 3 *Evaluate* the book’s argument or central claim. Is it internally coherent? 4 *Assess* the book’s argument or central claim. How does it fit with other literature in the field? How does it impinge upon your understanding of the subject matter? The assignment will be 1500-2000 words in length, properly formatted, and conform to SBL/Turabian style standards.

C. Course Work Start of Class, Jan. 6, 2012. Value: 5% each

Each student will, in consultation with the instructor, select two topics from the those discussed and prepare a 3 page bibliography (single-spaced, 1 line space between entries). Bibliographies should display appropriate awareness of resources available by making use of books and articles in the stacks as well as online resources in the Providence College and Seminary Library.

D. Post-Course Work Due March 1, 2012, electronic submissions, please. Value: 30% each

Each student will prepare a 4000 word paper, properly formatted and conforming to SBL/Turabian style standards on each of the topics chosen in the Course-Work assignment (i.e., 2 4000 word papers). The papers will be graded on interaction with key primary and secondary source material, quality of argument, and presentation (grammar, etc.). As a critical examination, the papers are not merely restatements of the works consulted, but must contain evaluative elements. Value for contemporary challenges in ministry, for example, may well be one facet you may wish to comment.

E. Additional instructions

1. Matters of Style

All written assignments must be submitted in a style consistent with the model set out by Kate L. Turabian in her work *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations: Seventh Edition*. Though there are many formatting/style guides, Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* is the *only* formatting system allowed for use in this class. Should you require tips and illustrations as to what Turabian formatting looks like, please consult Michael Gilmour’s “What do I have to do to get an ‘A’ on my Paper?: Paper Writing Tips and an Illustration of Turabian Formatting.” It is available in this reserve section of the library and online at: <http://prov.ca/library/turabppr.pdf>

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straight-forward style of academic prose. For accuracy in all things grammatical, please consult John Seely, *Everyday Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and for clarity in expressing one's ideas in one's writing, please consult William Strunk, Jr., *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999) or other similar guides.

I cannot evaluate ideas which are not clearly communicated in writing. I therefore encourage you to make sure you have proofread your papers before turning them in. Do not assume that because an idea is clear to you, you have communicated it clearly in writing. Make use of the tutors Prov provides—they are available for help and consultation at no cost in the library on a regular basis. If your paper is not communicating your ideas clearly, I will return it to you without a grade. You will then have *one week* to fix the mechanics of the paper without penalty. Should you take longer than a week, the usual late grade penalties shall apply.

2. Plagiarism and Honesty

Plagiarism is a common problem in higher education. Note that Providence College & Seminary's *Student Handbook* defines plagiarism as "taking and using the thoughts, ideas, and writings, and other creative works of another person, persons, and passing them off as one's own. A scholar who does so is intellectually dishonest. Scholars should give credit to give credit explicitly and clearly to ideas, thoughts, and writings of another." See pg. 16f of *The Student Handbook*. Penalties for plagiarism may include repeating the assignment, failing the assignment, or failing the course.

3. Title Page and Documentation

The title page for all written work ought to include the following:

The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, your name and Campus mailbox number.

4. Late Assignments

Integral to student participation in the course is timely preparation and submission of all assignments. In keeping with the policies of the School, assignments are to be completed in a timely manner. Because this is a modular course, extensions will not be granted for Pre-Course and Course work. Extensions may be made on compassionate grounds in consultation with the instructor for Post-Course work. In order to receive credit, the student must hand in all assignments.

5. Inclusive Language

It is expected that the student will use inclusive language when referring to other people: for example, "humankind" instead of "mankind," "brothers and sisters" instead of "brothers," "he/she" instead of "he."

V. GRADE GUIDE

The following is an explanation of the letter grading system:

Excellent (90-100%) A
Good (80-89%) B
Fair (70-79%) C
Passing (60-69%) D
Failure (0-59%) F

Marking is always difficult. Marks represent an evaluation of actual work—not good intentions, inherent ability, intelligence, personal or moral or spiritual qualities. I am *always* willing to discuss a grade on a paper or project. Please note that your paper will only receive a number grade, not a letter grade.

VI. EVALUATION

Pre-Course Work:	15% each
Course Work:	10%
Post-Course Work:	<u>30% each</u>
Total:	100%

VII. Course Outline

- Jan 2.
AM Introduction
PM Theological Prolegomena
- Jan 3.
AM God, the Bible and the Trinity
PM The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity
- Jan 4.
AM Contemporary Trinitarian Issues
PM The Attributes of God (1)
- Jan 5.
AM The Attributes of God (2)
PM The Doctrine of Creation
- Jan 6.
AM The Doctrine of Providence
PM The Problem of Evil

Course Bibliography

1. The following more recent works are helpful for introducing and orienting one to the doctrine of Revelation (especially as concerns the Bible) and God (the Holy Trinity):

- Adam, A.K.M. *Faithful Interpretation: Reading the Bible in a Postmodern World*.
- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, ed. G.W. Bromiley & T.F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975.
- Bauckham, Richard. *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bott & trans. John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Berrigan, Danie. *No Gods but One*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Bockmuehl, Markus and Alan J. Torrance, ed. *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible: How the New Testament Shapes Christian Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Bratten, Carl E. *Reclaiming the Bible for the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- _____, and Christopher Seitz, ed. *I am the Lord your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Bray, Gerald L. *Ancient Christian Doctrine 1: We Believe in One God*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God*. Contours of Christian Theology, ed. Gerald Bray. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

- Campbell, Douglas. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Cathey, Robert Andrew. *God in Postliberal Perspective: Between Realism and non-Realism*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009.
- Clayton, Philip. *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Collins, Paul M. *The Trinity: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Continuum, 2008.
- David, Ellen F., and Richard B. Hays, ed. *The Art of Reading Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Reason, Faith and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate*. New Haven, CT: Yale, 2009.
- Fackre, Gabriel. *Authority: Scripture in Church for the World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Fairbairn, Donald. *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- George, Timothy, ed. *God the Holy Trinity: Reflections on Christian Faith and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Goldingay, John. *Models for Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.
- _____. Gunton, Colin E. *Act & Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*. Cambridge & Grand Rapids, 2002.
- Hall, Christopher A. and Roger E. Olson. *The Trinity*. Guides to Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *God, Medicine, and Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Jenson, Robert W. *The Triune Identity: God According to the Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- Jenson, Robert W. and Solveig Lucia Gold. *Conversations with Poppi about God: An Eight Year Old and her Theologian Grandfather Trade Questions*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006.
- Jewett, Paul K. and Marguerite Schuster. *God, Creation, and Revelation: A Neo-Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.
- _____. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York and London: Continuum, 2009.
- Jüngel, Eberhard. *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism*. Translated by Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- _____. *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being Is in Becoming*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Keating, James F. and Thomas Joseph White, eds. *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Kelsey, David H. *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999.
- LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.
- Long, D. Stephen. *Speaking of God: Theology, Language, and Truth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*. San Francisco: Harper, 1981.
- Murphy, Francesca Aran and Philip G. Ziegler, ed. *The Providence of God*. New York: Continuum, 2009.
- Olson, Roger E. *God In Dispute: Conversations among Great Christian Thinkers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Padgett, Alan D., and Patrick R. Keifert, ed. *But Is It all True? The Bible and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Pelican, Jaroslav. *Whose Bible Is It? A Short History of the Scriptures*. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- Pinnock, Clark. *The Scripture Principle: Rethinking the Full Authority of the Bible*, 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

- Treier, Daniel J. *Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Ward, Timothy. *A Clear and Present Word: The Clarity of Scripture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Torrance, T.F. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Ward, Timothy. *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- _____. *First Things: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Watson, Francis. *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994.
- _____. *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997.
- Webster, John. *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Willis, David. *Notes on the Holiness of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Work, Telford. *Living and Active: Scripture in the Economy of Salvation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Wright, N.T. *Scripture and the Authority of God*. London: SPCK, 2005.
- Zizioulas, John D. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985.

2. The following works, available in the Prov library, are indispensable for orienting one to the development and history of the early Christian doctrine of God.

- Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought*. 3 Vols. Nashville: Abington, 1987.
- Grillmeier, Aloys. *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Translated by Pauline Allen and John Cawte. 2 vols. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987.
- Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Creeds*. London and New York: Longmans & Green, 1950.
- _____. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th ed. London and New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Development of Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.
- _____. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. 5 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971-89.
- Placher, William C. *A History of Christian Theology*. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Rusch, William G., ed. *The Trinitarian Controversy, Sources of Early Christian Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Wilken, Robert L. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Williams, Rowan. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Young, Francis M. *The Making of the Creeds*. London: SCM Press, 2002. [Not available in Library]

I. How to Write a Précis

A *précis* is a concise summary of a text. The following are some guidelines and suggestions for writing a good *précis*.

- a. Put yourself in the author's place. Your job is entirely descriptive, not critical. Imagine that you are the author and must say the same thing but in far fewer words. (A *précis* is one form of writing in which originality is *not* a virtue.)

- b. The author's name should not appear within the précis, since you are speaking *for*, not *about*, the author. Likewise, quotation marks never appear in a précis, since by definition the entire content is paraphrase, or indirect quotation. A précis is therefore one genre in which plagiarism is impossible (unless you crib someone else's précis!). A good précis is nevertheless a *paraphrase in one's own words*, not a pastiche of quotations.
- c. The précis should be a miniature version of the original. It should therefore have the same *structure*, though in a greatly compressed form. A good rule of thumb is to try reducing each section of original text to a paragraph of précis, and each original paragraph to a sentence of two in the précis. (If the resulting précis is too long, however, you will need to compress even further.) Section numbers of subtitles may be included in the précis; this practice aids the reader in comparing the précis to the original. (But if there are *too* many of them, they become distracting; use good judgement!)
- d. At each point in the original text ask yourself what the author's main point is. Then state it briefly and directly, shorn of elaboration, examples, and supporting arguments. Go directly to the next major point, making clear the transition between them.
- e. Your précis should be readable and make sense to someone unfamiliar with the original. Aim for a flowing and coherent summary rather than a list of unrelated statements.