

PROVIDENCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Being Human TS6202
Winter Term 2011

Meeting times: Thursday, 12:40-3:15

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Office Hours: Mondays by appointment; Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8:30-11:30.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The second of five interrelated courses in basic Christian doctrine, *Being Human* aims to introduce students to major topics within theological anthropology and hamartiology, with a view toward discerning their important for pastoral practice. In particular, the course seeks to foster among students more robust understanding of what it means to be human and of what we have become as sinners. As a result, students are expected to develop a systematic and historical understanding of the function of these doctrines, leading to a personal and critical appropriation of each for pastoral and theological leadership. Note that *Theological Foundations I* is a prerequisite for this class.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will:

- ♦ Become acquainted with basic Christian teaching concerning human beings and sin;
- ♦ Appreciate why a *theological* account of the human being is necessary for Christian community and existence;
- ♦ Become more adept at the art of reading theological texts and more skilled at expressing theological concepts both orally and in writing;
- ♦ Sharpen their ability to relate theological claims to pastoral practice through analysis of case studies;
- ♦ Acquire and advance skills and capacities for self-directed, distance learning in theological education.

III. REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The following texts *must* be purchased:

Jewett, Paul K with Marguerite Shuster. *Who We Are: Our Dignity as Human* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Shuster, Marguerite. *The Fall and Sin: What We Have Become as Sinners*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Jeal, Roy R., ed. *Human Sexuality and the Nuptial Mystery*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010.

The following text is *highly* recommended for purchase:

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. 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) *Second*, preparation involves completion of required readings by the date assigned. Diligent attention to the readings will enhance the student’s understanding and participation in the course. *Third*, full participation in the life of the classroom involves selective verbal contributions, attentive listening, and facilitating the participation of other students in the course.

B. Assignments

1. Class Presentation

Each student will be required to make a presentation at the beginning of a given class. The student’s task will be to provide a summary, in his/her *own* words, of a selected portion of the day’s readings, and to raise discussion questions in relation to it. In more detail, the student will prepare a one page, single-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman with 1 inch margins all around, *précis* of the reading. He/she will read his/her summary, provide a copy of it for his/her fellow students, and raise three or four class discussion questions appropriate to the reading. The student will then facilitate a discussion in relation to those questions. Students will be given opportunity to sign up for a given week on the first day of class. Instructions on how to write a *précis* are given on pg. 8 of the syllabus. The student’s peers will provide the mark for the student.

2. Critical Book Review—6 pages, 12-point, Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1 inch margins all around, footnotes (Turabian style), title page and bibliography, stapled in the upper-left hand corner.

The student shall write a five page critical book review of *The Nuptial Mystery* (ed. Jeal), to be handed in on February 10th. The purpose of a critical book review is to engage not only the theological positions and views of the text in its entirety, but also to provide a

seasoned theological reflection on its contents and why its contents matter for the practice of Christian ministry.

The assigned task, then, is to provide a careful and thorough examination of the basic issues(s) at stake in the text, and to evaluate the relative strength(s) and/or weakness(es) of the author's case. With this in mind, a critical book review should proceed in the following way. (1) *Read* the text in its entirety. (2) *Summarize* the dominant issue(s) and argument(s) in the author's mind and demonstrate your awareness of the *central thesis or theses* of the text. (3) *Critique* the author's programme: To what extent does the author help (or not help) you to better understand yourself as one created in the image of the triune God of the Gospel? (4) *Reflect* on what the implications of the author's programme are for your practice of Christian ministry? In short, a book review should include a summary of the position(s) taken in the book, and a critical and thoughtful evaluation of the content, with a view to its implications for pastoral practice.

3. Theological Essays—6 pages, 12-point, Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1 inch margins all around, footnotes (Turabian style), title page and bibliography, stapled in the upper-left hand corner.

Essay one—"What does it mean to be human?"

Please engage course readings, lectures, and material from class discussions in order to answer the above question. On the final page of your essay, present the possible pastoral significance of your conclusions. Note that this is not a research paper; you are not to use sources outside of those mentioned above. This essay is due on November 7th.

Essay two—"What is sin?"

Please engage course readings, lectures, and material from class discussions in order to answer the above question. On the final page of your essay, present the possible pastoral significance of your conclusions. Note, again, that this is not a research paper; you are not to use sources outside of those mentioned above. This essay is due on November 28th.

V. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Matters of Style & Documentation

Your critical book review and theological essays must be written, as mentioned previously, 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*. Though there are many formatting/style guides, Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* is the *only* formatting/footnoting 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.

It is assumed that each student will proofread his/her work carefully, and will seek help from the appropriate sources if the professor indicates that such help is necessary. Incidentally, Providence College & Seminary has free tutoring help available in the library. Should I recommend that you rewrite an assignment, please avail yourself of their services.

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. Late Assignments

Assignments are to be completed on time. Permissions for late extensions must be received from the instructor at least two days prior to the due date of a paper. Permission *may* be granted on the basis of an illness or emergency. If a student does not submit his/her assignment on time, that is at the beginning of class on the day that the assignment is due, and has not obtained an extension, he/she will receive a penalty of a 1/3 of a letter grade per working day.

VI. GRADING

The following is an explanation of the letter grading system:

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

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.

VII. EVALUATION

- ♦ Class Presentation 10%
- ♦ Critical Book Review 30%
- ♦ First Theological Essay 30%
- ♦ Second Theological Essay 30%

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT, AND REQUIRED READINGS

Unit One: Theological Anthropology

- 1) Jan 13 Course Introduction; *Imago Dei* as controlling motif
- 2) Jan 20 *Imago* I: Endowment, Function, Participation
Reading: Jewett, 3-99
- 3) Jan 27 *Imago* II: Participation in God
Reading: Jewett, 100-189
- 4) Feb 10: Participation as Male and Female I: Sexuality, Marriage and Family
* Critical Book Review Due
Reading: Jewett, 190-289
- 5) Feb 17: Participation as Male and Female II: Social Organization and Politics
Reading: Jewett, 290-350
- 6) Feb 24: Participation in Creation I: Dominion and Origins
Reading: Jewett, 351-391
- 7) Mar 3: Participation in Creation II: Dominion and Stewardship
Reading: 392-472
- 8) Mar 17: Participation in Creation III: The Extent of Dominion
Reading: Take a Break!

Unit Two: Sin

- 9) Mar 24 *Theological Essay One Due
Primal History and the Fall

- Reading: Shuster, pp. 3-61
- 10) Mar 31: Consequences of the Fall; Moral Evil and Providence
Reading: Shuster, pp. 62-134
- 11) April 7: Sin, sins and Original Sin; Human Freedom *Theological Essay Two
Due
Reading: Shuster, pp. 135-211
- 12) April 14: Politics Redux; Death
Reading: Shuster, pp. 212-262

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. III/2, *The Doctrine of Creation*. Ed. T. F. Torrance & G. W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960.
- Berkman, John, and Michael Cartwright, ed. *The Hauerwas Reader*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Berkouwer, G. C. *Man: The Image of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962.
- Blocher, Henri. *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Cambridge: Apollos, 1999.
- Gestrich, Christoph. *The Return of Splendor in the World: The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Forgiveness*. Translated by Daniel W. Bloesch. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Grenz, Stanley. *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*. Nashville: Abington Press, 1989.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Jenson, Robert W. *On Thinking the Human: Resolutions of Difficult Notions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Jewett, Paul. *Man as Male and Female*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- _____, and Marguerite Shuster. *Who We Are: Our Dignity as Humans: A Neo-Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- McFadyen, Alistair I. *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Meilander, Gilbert. *The Way that Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 volumes. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985.
- Peters, Ted. *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Placher, William C. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

- Rolnick, Philip A. *Person, Grace, and God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Schwartz, Hans. *Creation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Schwöbel, Christoph & Colin Gunton, eds. *Persons Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.
- Soulen, R. Kendall, and Linda Woodhead, eds. *God and Human Dignity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Man in History: A Theological Study*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1968.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. *Anthropology of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Zizioulas, John D. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985.

X. 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 judgment!)
- 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.

THEOLOGICAL ESSAY GRADE GUIDE

Name of Student _____

A. GRAMMAR & WRITING

- i. Is the text clean of spelling mistakes?
- ii. Is the text punctuated correctly?
- iii. Does the sentence structure adhere to basic rules of good grammar?
- iv. Does the footnote/bibliographic apparatus follow Turabian consistently?
(papers will be returned to the student for “another try” if necessary)

___/10

Are his/her questions fruitful for discussion? Do they raise important questions about the contents of the texts and its theological and/or pastoral implications? ___/5

Total ___/10