

**TH-505 Christian Theology:
The Basic Components of Faith and Life**

Time: Thursdays, 4:00-6:50 PM

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Ramy N. Marcos

Location: 77 Sherman, room 205

Email:

Modality: Hybrid Synchronous

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the major Christian doctrines. It will survey the principal doctrinal loci --such as revelation, creation, God/Trinity, Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology-- from various theological perspectives, including contemporary feminist, black, and liberation theologies. The course will help students to connect theology with personal faith, ecclesial ministry, and social change.

Course Objectives

- To explore the basic components of Christian doctrines
- To analyze the major doctrines and to increase student confidence in theological dissection
- To develop a constructive understanding of the relationship between theology and practice

Required Reading

Bettenson, Henry, and Chris Maunder, eds. *Documents of the Christian Church*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation: 50th Anniversary Edition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2020.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. "Liberation and Salvation." In *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, translated by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, 83–105. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Johnson, Elizabeth. "Redeeming the Name of Christ." In *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, edited by Catherine M. Lacugna, 115–37. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1993.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology, Third Ed.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014.

Recommended Reading

Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Translated by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Revised edition. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Isherwood, Lisa, and Dorothea McEwan. *An A to Z of Feminist Theology*. New York, NY: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Lacugna, Catherine M., ed. *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1993.

Placher, William, ed. *Essentials of Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Plantinga, Richard J., Thomas R. Thompson, and Matthew D. Lundberg. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Assignments

1. Class participation and discussion (10%): Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.
2. Weekly reflection essay (20%): Students should complete the required readings and write a one-page reflection paper (other ways of reflection can be accepted, such as voice recording, video, etc.). The reflection will include a summary of the idea that they choose to engage with, as well as an exploration of their opinions. This requirement is expected to be posted 24 hours prior to the class time.
3. Theology in context (30%): Students will choose a faith-based organization or outreach ministry that deals with a contemporary theological topic in practice --such as poverty, social justice, migration, disability, domestic violence and child abuse, or climate change—to visit during weeks 5-6. Then, they will prepare a presentation, including a dissection around the visit and the theology behind this ministry. The instructor of the course will assign a time and date for each analysis to be presented during weeks 7-8. The presentation should also rely on at least two academic sources, and be submitted in a written form of 1,000-1,500 words by October 16.
4. Final project/paper (40%): Students will choose between an expansion of their mid-term presentation topic or a new one that may serve their current ministry or call. The topics should be related to the course themes. Students will submit a one-page proposal to describe their plan by November 10. The proposal should include title, thesis, outline, and sources. The final project/paper should use at least five academic sources and be submitted at the last lecture of the course, December 15. It should be around 2,000-3,000 words for the development of the midterm presentation, and 1,000-1,500 for new topics.

Note: All written assignments should be posted on Canvas. Citation format should follow *The Chicago Manual/Turabian* rules for footnoting and bibliography. A summary of these rules can be found on the HIU website under current-students/student-writing-resources.

Class Schedule

1. September 8 **Introduction to Theology**
Reading: Migliore: 21-45; Cone, 1-21

2. September 15 **Revelation and Scriptures**
Reading: Migliore: 46-95; Cone, 22-57; Bettenson: 28-31

3. September 22 **God**
Reading: Migliore, 66-95; Cone, 58-86; Bettenson: 26-28

4. September 29 **Creation**
Reading: Migliore, 96-120;

5. October 6 **Providence of God and Evil**
Reading: Migliore, 121-142
Watch: *The Shack*. 2017
<https://www.netflix.com/title/80135710?source=35>

6. October 13 **Humanity**
Reading: Migliore, 143-167; Cone, 87-115; Bettenson: 55-66

7. October 20 **Student Presentations**
Reading: [TBA]

8. October 27 **Student Presentations**
Reading: [TBA]

9. November 3 **Christology (Classical Tradition)**
Reading: Migliore, 168-204; Bettenson: 31-55
10. November 10 **Christology (Contemporary Theology)**
Reading: Migliore, 205-231; Johnson, 115-137; Cone, 116-136
11. November 17 **Pneumatology**
Reading: Migliore, 232-258;
12. December 1 **Ecclesiology**
Reading: Migliore, 259-313; Bettenson: 66-83, 397-423
13. December 8 **Eschatology**
Reading: Migliore, 347-373; Cone, 137-151
14. December 15 **Religious Pluralism**
Reading: Migliore, 314-347; Bettenson: 390-397

Help & Recourses:

For those who would like assistance in how to write a proper research paper, there is a good guide at: <https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/current-students/student-resources/student-writing-resources>. And you can contact Emily Holcombe, our writing consultant, (eholcombe@hartfordinternational.edu and/or by text at 860-707-4585 or phone at 860-206-4535).

Course Polices:

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic

Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined.

For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism: (a) the submission of another person's work as one's own; (b) the submission of a commercially prepared paper; (c) the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself; (d) the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.
2. Plagiarism by paraphrase: (a) mere re-arrangement of another person's works and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism; (b) paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism.
3. See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.
4. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.

Grading Scale

A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+(87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B-(80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+(77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Other Academic policies are listed at <https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/current-students/academics/academic-policies>.