

JUNE TERM 2021: JUNE 7-11
COURSE SYLLABUS
DEPARTMENT: Systematic Theology
Confessing Christ Today: What does it mean to be Christ-centered in the 21st Century?
Course Number: TBD
Credit Hours: 3
Monday-Friday/9:15-12:15; 1:15-2:30
(Reading assignment for each afternoon)

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WELCOME TO STUDENTS

I am delighted to be teaching this course on Christology at the North American Lutheran Seminary. The structure of the class will be a hybrid seminar, which means it will involve lecture components, sustained engagement with theological texts, and extensive classroom discussion. I will be distributing a video orientation to the class for registered and prospective students. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email if you have any questions about the course before then. I look forward to engaging this significant doctrine with all of you.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course considers the question of what it means to confess Christ and to be Christ-centered in the 21st century. In addition to examining key questions and challenges for the doctrine of Christ today, the class will address the biblical foundations and historical development of an orthodox doctrine of Christ with special reference to the maturation of conciliar Christology in figures such as John of Damascus and Maximus the Confessor, and the appropriation of conciliar Christology among the Lutheran reformers. The focus throughout will rest upon the importance of Christology for the mission, worship, and sanctified praxis of the church within her modern context.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

1. Engage texts within the field of Christology charitably, critically and coherently.
2. Identify significant biblical texts pertinent to the development of Christological dogma, and express familiarity with various ways in which the Scripture bear witness to the unique identity of Jesus.
3. Describe accurately the content of conciliar Christology, and identify alternative interpretations of Christ this account is meant to proscribe.

4. Explain the Lutheran appropriation of conciliar Christology in relation to 16th century debates pertinent to the doctrine of Christ (e.g., sacramental theology, the communication of attributes, etc).
5. Express concrete ways in which the doctrine of Christ influences other theological *loci*, and explain why Christology is important for the life, mission and witness of the catholic church.

Along with the objectives related to knowledge and skill that will be assessed through your written work, there are other objectives that are worth mentioning, even though your development in these areas will not be formally assessed. Seminary education is not just a matter of growing in knowledge and skill, but also in one's relationship with God and one's Christian character as a disciple of Jesus. I pray that your work in this course will promote such growth.

COURSE TEXTS

Required texts:

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0300072686

Brian E. Daley, SJ. *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0198845898

Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology*. Faith and Cultures Series. New York: Orbis Books, 2004. ISBN-13: 978-1570755378

Work, Telford. *Jesus-the End and the Beginning: Tracing the Christ-Shaped Nature of Everything*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1540961525

(Other texts will be provided as PDFs on the course page)

Recommended texts:

Evans, Stephen, Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Gerald O'Collins, S.J. *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Young, Frances M. and Andrew Teal. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background*, second edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.

Riches, Aaron. *Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Christ the Key*. Current Issues in Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Chemnitz, Martin. *The Two Natures in Christ*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0758615459

Williams, Rowan. *Christ the Heart of Creation*. London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018.

White, Thomas Joseph, O.P. *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology*. Thomistic Ressourcement Series. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participate actively in classroom discussion (this presupposes faithful attendance).
2. Complete all assigned reading (a reading report will be submitted at the end of the class)

Please note that some of the readings must be completed before the class begins on June 7, some must be completed during the week of class (in the afternoon and evening), and some must be completed after class sessions conclude on June 11. For more specific information, see the course schedule below.

3. Compose a reading log with notes and questions pertaining to each reading assignment.
4. Lead (or co-lead) the discussion of an assigned text.
5. Compose a research paper on Christology of 15-18 pages (STM and DMin students will compose a paper of 20-25 pages)

COURSE EVALUATION

Trinity's Grading Scale:

A (95+)

A- (90-94)

B+ (87-89)

B (84-86)

B- (80-83)

C+ (77-79)

C (74-76)

C- (70-73)

D (below 70) → failure

F (below 60) → failure

A: Work will demonstrate exceptional coverage of the material. What distinguishes work in this category from a "B" is the author's ability to develop the material in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. The author will engage with the material in a way that is often though not always marked by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or extensive research.

B: Work will demonstrate broad (sufficient information is covered) and deep (supporting material is offered) coverage of the material. Information will be accurate and there will be a clear and coherent structure. Coverage of the material and comments will be reasonably competent without being exceptional. .

C: Work will demonstrate reasonable coverage of the material but will lack breadth and depth of analysis. There will not be serious inadequacies in the information presented, but the overall

structure will be characteristically unclear, narrow, and shallow and void of imaginative and interesting analysis.

D: Work will be notably defective according to the criteria outlined above.

F: Work will demonstrate a complete failure on the part of its author to interact with the material in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

CLASS GRADE BASED ON

Reading (15%)

Participation (10%)

Reading log (15%)

Guided discussion (20%)

Research paper (40%)

COURSE DESIGN

	Topic	Required Reading	Key questions
Pre-course requirements	(Preview of the landscape)	Pelikan, <i>The Illustrated Jesus through the Centuries</i> Daley, <i>God Visible</i> Stinton, <i>Jesus of Africa</i>	
Monday	The challenge and promise of Christology today	John Mbiti, "Some African Concepts of Christology." In <i>Christology and the Younger Churches</i> , edited by F. F. Vicedom, 51-62. London: SPCK, 1972 (PDF online) Bruce McCormack, "The Person of Christ" in <i>Mapping Modern Theology</i> (PDF online) (these texts will be discussed on the first day of class)	What are the unique challenges confronting Christology in our contemporary moment? What does it mean to embrace a "Christ-centered" theology?
Tuesday	Christ according to the Scriptures	Jipp, <i>Messianic Theology of the NT</i> , chapter 11 (PDF online)	What is the shape of canonical Christology?

			In what sense is Christ the “center” of Scripture?
Wednesday	The development of conciliar Christology	John of Damascus, <i>The Orthodox Faith</i> , Book III, 267-343 (PDF online)	What is “conciliar Christology”? Is conciliar Christology a faithful continuation of canonical Christology? In what sense are premodern theologies Christocentric?
Thursday	Lutheran Christology	Luther, “On the Councils and the Church” (LW 41: 53-136; PDF selection online) Leonard Hutter, <i>Compend of Lutheran Theology</i> , Article III (PDF online)	Does Lutheranism affirm, modify, or reject conciliar Christology? In what sense is Luther’s theology Christocentric?
Friday	Confessing Christ today	Joseph Ratzinger, “Taking Bearings in Christology” in <i>Behold the Pierced One</i> (PDF online) Tanner, <i>Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity</i> (PDF selection online)	To what extent must Christology be updated or revised in order to address our contemporary situation? What does it mean to confess Christ as center today?
Post-course requirements	(Putting the pieces together)	Formula of Concord, article VIII (i.e., read article VIII in the Epitome, and the Solid Declaration—pp. 508-14; and 616-34 in the Kolb/Wengert edition) <i>Work, Jesus—The End and the Beginning</i>	

COURSE AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a violation of an author's/artist's intellectual property rights and is a serious offense. Please note the rules against copying material in Trinity School for Ministry's Academic Catalog (found online [here](#) in the section on "Cheating and Plagiarism" in Academic Policies): *Students at Trinity are expected to display the highest standards of personal and academic integrity in the development of research papers and other academic projects. Perhaps the most critical issue in exhibiting integrity in academic assignments is student compliance with accepted practices of notation of resources and references used to develop their paper or project. It is recognized there can be some confusion regarding proper procedures and practices regarding integration of bibliographical references into assignments. The [...] policy is intended to address both intentional and unintentional plagiarism. The policy also recognizes that there are levels of plagiarism and that consequences must be aligned with the seriousness of the offense. All students are responsible to be familiar with this policy. Ignorance of plagiarism guidelines will not be accepted as a defense or excuse for violating these standards.*

If a student does not know whether or not they may be engaging in plagiarism, they are encouraged to speak to Leslie Thyberg, our Learning Skills Coordinator.

Late Assignments:

Work turned in late (quizzes, exams, etc.) for any reason, barring documented medical emergency, will be accepted up to 3 days after it was due, with a grade level reduction (an A becomes a B, etc.). Any work turned in after 3 days cannot be counted for credit.

Incompletes:

Incompletes are not normally given and are granted only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to incomplete work. In order to request an incomplete, student must obtain the necessary form online and bring to the professor who will list the specific assignments to be completed with due dates. The due date cannot be beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval.

Missed Class Policy:

3 missed classes for any reason automatically drops a student from the course.

ATS Review of Student Work:

Samples of student work may be used as part of an on-going assessment of courses and degree programs. Students' names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.

TSM DMin Policy for Late Work:

All students have the responsibility to complete their academic work in a timely manner and to comply with all course requirements set by the instructor in the course syllabus, including deadlines for assignments and papers. *Students must not in any circumstance assume that late submission of work will be overlooked or treated casually.*

Late work and extensions. Instructors may grant an extension of due dates for class assignments. If students make a mutually acceptable prior arrangement with an instructor, they may with the instructor's permission submit required course work up to the official date for the end of term. When students expect to submit required course work later than the due date assigned by the instructor, but before the last day to submit work for the term then the student must signify this prospect to the instructor in writing, stating the extenuating circumstances, to obtain permission for late submission, on or before the assigned due date or stated examination day of a given term. A copy of this request must be submitted to the Registrar to be kept in the student's file. The instructor may impose a condition that the grade be reduced, depending upon the reason for the requested extension. The instructor shall clearly signify in the syllabus any such condition to the student, including the amount of reduction.

Incompletes. Extensions beyond the official last day to submit work for the term will involve an incomplete and may be obtained only upon written petition to the Academic Dean and Registrar, indicating the support of the course instructor for such an extension. The petition must demonstrate significant extenuating circumstances justifying the request. The Academic Dean and instructor, in consultation with the Registrar, shall determine the length and end date of the incomplete period. The Registrar will generate a contract to be signed by the instructor, the student and the Academic Dean. The incomplete work shall be due no later than 30 days following the original work due date. An administration fee of \$200 which is not eligible for scholarship, shall be added to the student's bill. Additionally, the student may not register for courses in the next term until the required work is submitted and all fees are paid in full.

Incompletes will be arranged in accordance with the procedure outlined in the paragraph above; an "I" indicating an incomplete will be entered upon the student's transcript for the course in question. When the work has been completed, the instructor shall submit a final grade to the Registrar, who shall then make an appropriate notation on the transcript indicating removal of the Incomplete and entering the final grade.

If a student fails to meet the applicable deadline, in accordance with the procedures stated above, an "F" shall be automatically registered for the work in question, and a grade for the course shall be calculated on that basis, together with the evaluation of other coursework submitted. Additionally, the student may also be put on academic probation.