

T 101 Introduction to Theological Reflection (Spring 2019)

Bethany Theological Seminary

Tuesday, 8:30 – 11:10 a.m.

Professor Nate Inglis

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

Course Description

This course introduces theology as a practice of creative and critical reflection on humanity, the world, God, and Jesus from a faith perspective. In this class we will put perennial theological themes in dialogue with insights from the natural sciences and current social justice issues that challenge Christian communities today. By connecting the theological tradition with science and social justice, students will consider how to reflect on and express faith in an informed dialogue with other fields of study that are essential to a holistic understanding of our world today.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course a student will be able to:

1. Develop the foundational skills necessary for the distinctive practice of doing theological reflection, including thinking, reading, research, and writing.
2. Build a working vocabulary of important theological and scientific terminology as a basis for understanding of the central themes in theological studies.
3. Demonstrate a critical awareness of and an ability to distinguish between the different traditions, theories, and communities of discourse that inform the theological, scientific, and social perspectives we read.
4. Clearly articulate your own ideas and arguments in a learning community characterized by attentive respect for difference, a willingness to reconsider one's position in light of another's experience or insight, and a commitment to learning together.
5. Write reflectively and analytically about theological, scientific, and social issues raised in the course in order to find your own theological voice, connect your own beliefs, practices, and commitments and reflect on how to put these values into action in the service of others.

MDiv, MA, CATS, CTTI, and CTS Program Objectives

- Interpret Scripture, tradition, and theology: Apply the results of careful interpretation, with attention to multiple contexts, to contemporary settings, situations, and concerns (MDiv 1.3, MA 1.3)
- Communicate faith and values with contextual awareness: Express one's understanding of faith and values effectively in writing and in oral presentations (MDiv 2.2, MA 2.2)
- Integrate learning from theological and other disciplines with the practice of ministry (CATS 2).
- Develop theological perspectives and preliminary skills necessary in the practice of ministry (CATS 4)
- Engage in constructive understandings of the nature of theology, with attention to its function in the public sphere and connections to wider cultural contexts (CTTI 1).

- Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of approaches in theological thinking and writing, including familiarity with terminology, categories, and methods (CTTI 2).
- Demonstrate knowledge of scientific and theological methods (CTS 1)
- Explain how they relate fields of science and theology, including areas of potential conflict, complementarity, and collaboration (CTS 2).

THINGS YOU NEED FOR THIS COURSE

In this class we will read significant portions of all the following required and recommended texts, and they are all available for purchase online. However, you are not expected to purchase the recommended texts unless you would like to, since they are available as eBooks from the Lilly Library. [Instructions for finding all other required readings are available on our Moodle course site.](#)

Required Texts

- Edwards, Denis. *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*, reissue. Wipf & Stock, 2005. ISBN: 9781597520508
- Grinnell, Frederick. *Everyday Practices of Science: Where Intuition and Passion Meet Objectivity and Logic*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780199794652
- Harding, Sandra. *Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues*. University of Illinois Press, 2006. ISBN: 9780252073045
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Fortress Press, 1993. ISBN: 0800627350
- Sölle, Dorothee. *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology*, reissue. Wipf & Stock, 2016. ISBN: 9781498295765

Recommended Texts

- Delio, Illia. *Making All Things New*. Orbis Books, 2015. ISBN: 9781626981362 **Lilly eBook**
- Hawking, Stephen. *A Brief History of Time*, Bantam Books, 1998. ISBN: 9780553380163 **online eBook**
- Fuentes, Augustín. *The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans Exceptional*. Dutton, 2017. ISBN: 9781101983942 **Lilly eBook**
- Haught, John. *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*. Paulist Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780809148066 **Lilly eBook**
- Johnson, Elizabeth. *Quest for the Living God*. Continuum, 2011. ISBN: 1441174621 **Lilly eBook**
- Smedley, Audrey and Brian Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 4th ed. Routledge, 2011. ISBN: 0813345545 **Lilly eBook**

Reference Texts

- Clayton, Philip. *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199543658 **Lilly eBook**
- McKim, Donald. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, second edition. Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. ISBN: 0664238351 **Lilly eBook**

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance

This class will follow Bethany's policy on attendance, which places limits on allowable absences. The policy states that in a course that meets weekly:

"Students who miss more than 20% of the scheduled face-to-face meetings for any reason will not receive credit. Instructors may set a more stringent standard for attendance when warranted in a particular course, and absences totaling less than 20% of the total class time may still be a factor in the instructor's evaluation of whether a student as earned credit." (Bethany Student Handbook, 2014-2015, pp. 71-72.)

2. Assignments

All assignments are due on the date and time listed on the course schedule and on the assignment instructions. If you know that you will not complete an assignment on time, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss your options. There are no exceptions for late work if you do not approve it with me ahead of time. Do not wait until the last minute to submit. If you turn in an assignment very close to the deadline, any technical problems with your computer or your internet connection may cause your assignment to be counted as late. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be submitted online through our course Moodle site.

3. Grading Criteria

Students will receive either Credit or No-Credit for the course, as well as a Rubric Assessment. However, evaluation for Bethany students will appear as follows: *Credit with Distinction, Credit, Credit with Concern, or No-Credit*. This will allow Bethany to recognize exemplary work while also identifying areas of concern as a student progresses through the program. Note: This will only appear on the Rubric Assessment for Bethany students, while the grade reported and transcript will continue to reflect the "Credit/No-Credit" system.

4. Academic Intellectual Honesty Policy and Plagiarism

Using content from other sources as your own, or using classmates' responses to answer examination or assignment questions undermines the integrity and respect on which our class depends. This course complies with Bethany's policy and actions on plagiarism as stated in the Student Handbook:

"Plagiarism is using the work of other people without giving them credit, whether in written assignments or formal oral presentations The consequences for plagiarism will vary according to the extent of the offense, but even 'minor' instances are considered serious enough to incur penalties. These may range from rewriting the assignment, non-crediting the assignment, or non-crediting the course, up to dismissal from the program. Any instance of plagiarism will be reported by the instructor to the student, the student's advisor, the academic dean of the instructor's institution, and the dean of the student's institution, if appropriate. Students who wish to challenge the charge of plagiarism have recourse to the Complain Policy of the instructor's institution." (Bethany Student Handbook, 2014-2015, p. 80).

5. Turabian Citation Style

The Turabian (aka Chicago) citation style, with footnotes and full bibliography, is required for all written assignments in this course unless otherwise specified. Guidelines for this citation style can be found in the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). A Turabian Quick Reference Guide is available as a downloadable PDF on the Bethany Theological Seminary website at: www.bethanyseminary.edu/academics/style.

6. Students with Disabilities Policy

This course complies with Bethany's policy on students with disabilities, as stated in the Student Handbook, and is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you believe that you need accommodations, please be in contact with the Director of Student Development about the development of such a plan. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate this plan to the instructor as soon as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading, Attendance, and Leading Class Discussions, and Active Participation: [40%]

Your regular attendance in class sessions, close reading of assigned texts, and thoughtful participation in discussions is essential not only to your own learning, but to the learning of your fellow students as well. Except for extreme circumstances, you are expected to be present and prepared to actively participate in all class sessions. As a part of your participation you will be asked to lead several class discussions during the semester. As discussion leader, you should come to class prepared to present a brief summary of the issues you think are most important from the week's required reading, and to pose at least three thoughtful questions to guide our conversation.

2. Opening Reflection: [5%]

We will open each class with a short reflection. You will be asked to lead one or more of these. It is an opportunity to connect the ideas we are discussing in class with our lives, our faith, and our values. Be creative and use whatever resources inspire you.

3. Reflective essay [Credit/No Credit]

At the beginning of the semester you will be asked to write a two-page reflective essay.

4. Vocabulary Quiz [15%]

Near the end of the course there will be a short theological vocabulary quiz. Details will be explained in class.

5. Writing Assignments (2 total) [40%]

During the course of the semester there will be two 8-10 page essays. In the first assignment you will be asked to reflect theologically in conversation with a current issue in science, and in the second assignment you will be asked to reflect theologically in conversation with a social justice issue.

Optional: As an alternative to writing the second essay, you may choose to attend the Bethany Theology and Science Conference on April 25-27 and then write a 4-5 page essay on one theme or topic that caught your interest. Details will be explained in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION

January 29: Practicing Theology

Reading:

- Jennifer Shepherd, "Thinking Mindfully," in *Thinking Theologically*, ch 1.
- Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, ch. 1.
- Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology*, 1-41.
- Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*, ch. 1.

February 5: Practicing Science

Reading:

- Frederick Grinnell, *Everyday Practices of Science: Where Intuition and Passion Meet Objectivity and Logic*, selections.

February 12: Models of Theology and Science Dialogue

Reading:

- John Haught, *Science and Faith*, 9-49 (chs. 1-3).
- Elizabeth Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 1-18 (ch. 1).
- Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*, ch. 2.

Watch AAAS Video

- "Origins of the Conflict Thesis"

II. THE WORLD AND HUMANITY ACCORDING TO THE SCIENCES

February 19: Scientific perspectives on the origins of the universe

Reading:

- Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 1-82 (chs. 1-5).

Watch AAAS Video:

- "Space and Exploration"

February 26: Scientific perspectives on the origin of life

Reading:

- Charles Darwin, selection from *On the Origin of Species*, in *The History and Philosophy of Science*, 853-920.

Watch Film:

- *Creation* (2009)

March 5: Scientific perspectives on the origin of humans

Reading:

- Augustín Fuentes, *The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans*.

Class Presentation:

- Go to <https://www.sapiens.org>.
- Choose an article that sheds light on the scientific understanding of our species.
- You will have five minutes to share what you learned during class.

Watch AAAS Video:

- "To Be Human"

March 11: LAST DAY TO DROP – NO "NC" ON TRANSCRIPT

March 12: NO CLASS – Spring Break

III. THEOLOGY IN A WORLD INFORMED BY SCIENCE

March 19: Theological perspectives on God and creation

Reading:

- Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, ch. 9.
- Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*, ch. 3.
- Sallie McFague, *The Body of God*, 131-196 (chs. 5-6).

March 26: Theological perspectives on Jesus Christ

Reading:

- Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*, ch. 5.
- Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 33-88.
- J. Denny Weaver, "Narrative Christus victor: the answer to Anselmian atonement violence," in *Atonement and Violence: a theological conversation*, 1-29.

April 2: Theological perspectives on human beings and church

Reading:

- Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New*, chs. 4, 7-9.
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Patriarchal Household of God and the Ekklesia of Women," in *In Memory of Her*, 285-342.
- Oscar Romero, "The Church, the Body of Christ in History," in *Voice of the Voiceless*, 63-84.

FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

IV. THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE FROM PERSPECTIVES ON THE SOCIAL MARGINS

April 9: Theology, Science, and Colonialism

Reading:

- Lisa Stenmark, "Thinking Through Three Revolutions: Religion, Science, and Colonialism," in *Unsettling Science and Religion*, 69-87 (ch. 3).
- Sandra Harding, *Science and Social Inequality*, 31-49 (ch. 2)
- Jon Sobrino, "Theology from Amidst the Victims," in *The Future of Theology*, 164-175.
- Ignacio Ellacuría, "Santa Clara University Commencement Address."

April 16: Theology, Science, and Women's experiences

Reading:

- Carolyn Merchant, "Dominion over Nature," in *The Gender and Science Reader*, 68-81 (ch. 8).
- Sandra Harding, *Science and Social Inequality*, 66-79, 98-109 (chs. 4, 6).
- Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, 90-112 (ch. 5).

April 23: Scientific Racism

Reading:

- Audrey Smedley and Brian Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 4th ed., 11-33, 213-248, 269-305 (chs. 1, 9-10, 12-13).

VOCABULARY QUIZ

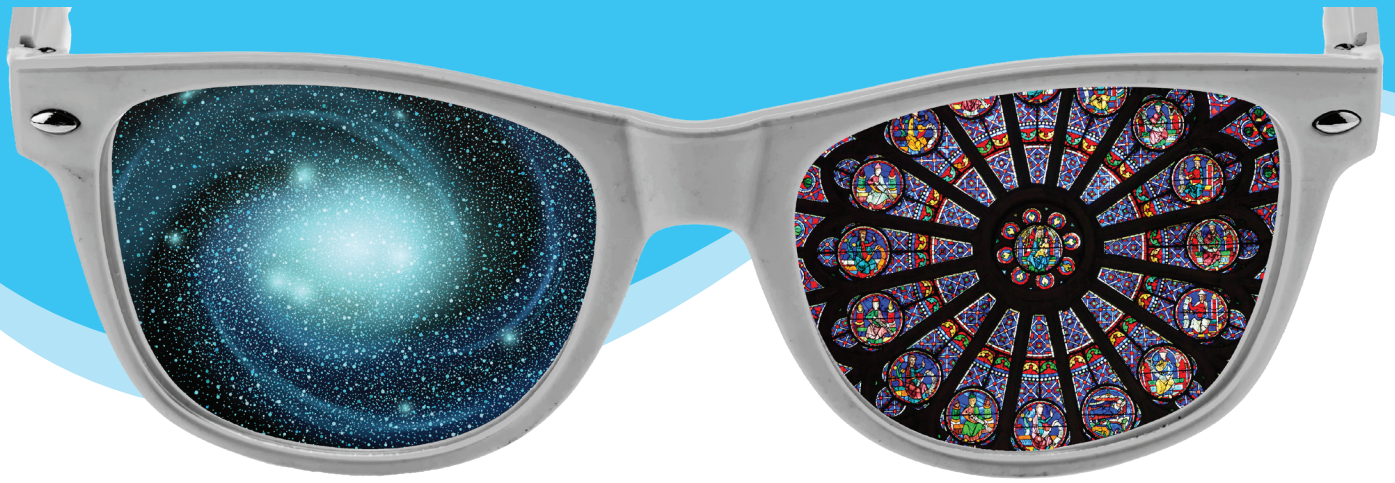
April 25 - 27: Bethany Theology and Science Conference

April 30: Science, Race, and Theological Ethics

Reading:

- Audrey Smedley and Brian Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 4th ed., 307-350 (chs. 14-15).
- Emilie Townes, "The Doctor Ain't Taking No Sticks," in *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death*, 81-106 (ch. 4).
- Sandra Harding, *Science and Social Inequality*, 17-30 (ch. 1).

May 7: SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE



“Look at Life”

A Conference Where Faith Meets Science

SCHEDULE

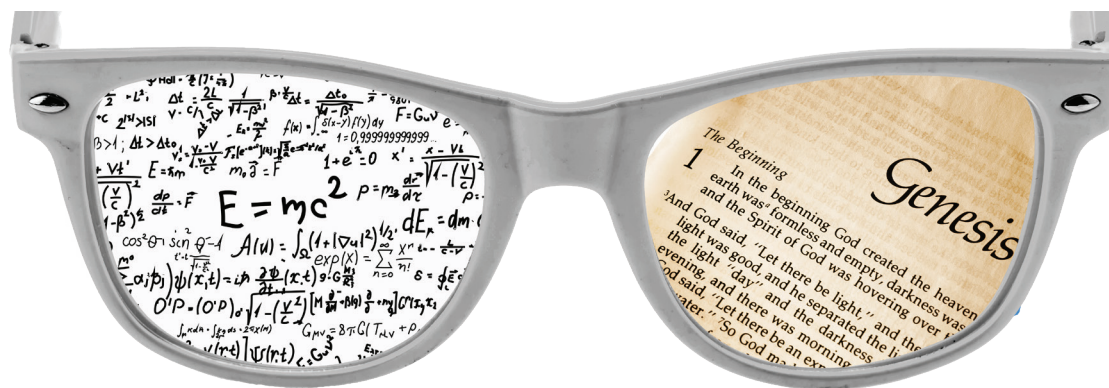
Thursday, April 25

3:00-4:00 PM	Check-In
4:00	Welcome: Seminary President and Conference Directors Invocation: Song and Prayer
4:30	“The Big Bang, Fine Tuning, and the Existence of God” <i>Isaac Wilhelm, Rutgers University</i>
5:20	Break
5:30	“Looking for Life on Other Planets” <i>Dr. Wes Tobin, Indiana University East</i>
6:20	Dinner
7:40	Small Group Meetings
8:45	Reception



Friday, April 26

8:00 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:45	Morning Song and Prayer
9:00	“Putting Faith and Science Back Together Again” <i>Dr. Russell Haitch, Bethany Theological Seminary</i>
10:00	Break
10:15	“The Tree of Life, Biologically Speaking: A Brief History with Updates” <i>Dr. Craig Story, Gordon College</i>
11:15	Break
11:30	From Tree Rings to Microwaves: How Scientists Date Stuff <i>Dr. Katherine Miller-Wolf, Indiana University East</i>
12:30 PM	Lunch
1:30	Small Group Meetings
2:30	Nature Walk or Museum Visit
4:15	“The Perfect Human? The Promises and Perils of Human Genome Editing” <i>Dr. Craig Story, Gordon College</i>
5:15	Dinner
6:30	“The Lost World of Genesis 1” <i>Dr. John Walton, Wheaton College</i>
7:45	Break
8:00	Dialogue with Dr. John Walton
8:45	Reception



Saturday, April 27

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| 8:00 AM | Continental Breakfast |
| 8:45 | Morning Song and Prayer |
| 9:00 | “The Lost World of Adam and Eve”
<i>Dr. John Walton, Wheaton College</i> |
| 10:15 | Break |
| 10:30 | Professors Discuss Genesis
<i>Dr. Nancy Bowen, Earlham School of Religion</i>
<i>Dr. Martin Hanna, Andrews University</i>
<i>Dr. Russell Haitch, Bethany Theological Seminary</i>
<i>Dr. Steve Schweitzer, Bethany Theological Seminary</i>
<i>Dr. John Walton, Wheaton College</i> |
| 11:30 | Small Group Meetings |
| 12:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 | Panel Discussion: Pulling Strands Together |
| 2:30 | Closing Prayer |



Conference Presenters and Panelists



Nancy Bowen
Earlham School of Religion



Craig Story
Gordon College



Russell Haitch
Bethany Theological Seminary



John Walton
Wheaton College



Martin Hanna
Andrews University



Wes Tobin
Indiana University East



Katherine Miller-Wolf
Indian University East



Isaac Wilhelm
Rutgers University