

**McCORMICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
T-300, INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
SPRING 2019, THURSDAYS 6:00 – 8:50 p.m.**

Teaching Team:

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Educational Assistants:

Nathan Achterhof
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DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to Christian theology. The approach to theological inquiry is *constructive, contextual, cross-cultural, conversational, and ecumenical*. Attention is given to understanding basic church teachings (God, creation, humanity, Christ, Spirit, 'last things') in connection with contemporary issues affecting church and society. Plenary presentations and responses, small group discussion, reading, writing, and critical thinking with key texts, writing and revising a statement of faith, researching and writing a semester paper, and other special projects are included. Course materials and assignments will be posted in Moodle. Note: This course is being taught in both Spanish and English.

DEGREE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Core Learning Outcomes: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Ministry, and Master of Arts in Theological Studies Degree Programs. The Seminary intends that each student will be able to do the following when she or he graduates with an MDiv, MAM, or MTS:

- 1. Think critically.**
- 2. Construct theological meaning using biblical and Christian traditions.**
- 3. Communicate effectively.**
- 4. Exhibit growth in cross-cultural engagement.**

The Seminary intends that students who graduate with an MTS degree will be able to do all the above plus

- 5. Engage in theological research and analysis based upon an argument and construct a theological essay or thesis article.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

This course is designed to introduce you to the practice of theological reflection focused on interpretation of basic church teachings. An overall aim for the course is to gain the ability to use theological resources critically and responsibly to articulate a *constructive, coherent, and ecumenical* interpretation of Christian faith pertinent to congregations and social contexts of ministry. Students will develop capacities to:

1. Articulate and interpret central doctrines of the Christian tradition.
2. Define and use the basic vocabulary of theology.
3. Recognize and evaluate contexts that inform theological practice.
4. Articulate a brief statement of faith that is a constructive, coherent, and ecumenical.
5. Engage in theological research and writing.
6. Think theologically and pastorally about human situations.
7. Develop a critical awareness of diversity of theological perspectives.
8. To prepare for thoughtful engagement in leadership in our ecumenical and inter-religious context.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

All – English and Spanish - will be on reserve, or (McKim *Dictionary*, González *Diccionario*) available in the reference section, in the JKM library.

1. McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. **Second Edition: Revised and Expanded**. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0664238353.
OR González, Justo. González, Justo L. *Diccionario Manual Teológico*. **Segunda edición**. Barcelona: Clie Editorial, 2015. ISBN 978-8482679624 **OR** *Primera edición*, ISBN 978-8482674827
2. Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. **Third Edition**. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014, ISBN 978-0802871855 **OR** Second Edition, 2004, ISBN 978-0802827876
OR González, Justo y Zaida Maldonado Pérez. *Introducción a la Teología Cristiana*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003. ISBN 978-0687074273
3. Johnson, Elizabeth. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York, NY: Crossroads, 3rd edition, 2018, ISBN 978-0824522070, **or** an earlier edition (2002, 1992)
OR Johnson, Elizabeth. *La Que Es: El Misterio de Dios en el Discurso Teológico Feminista*. Barcelona: Herder, 2002. ISBN 978-8425422348
4. Cone, James. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis. (The 2010 40th anniversary edition is ISBN 978-1570758959, but any earlier edition is also acceptable.)
OR Cone, James (trans. Manuel Mercader). *Teología Negra de la Liberación*, Buenos Aires: C. Lohlé, 1973.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Attendance and Informed Participation: Attendance and informed participation are essential in T300. E-mail your Educational Assistant if you have an emergency and must be absent. Any absence results in a 3% final grade point average reduction. If you would like to do makeup work to offset this, consult your Educational Assistant for the appropriate assignment for the week missed. The makeup work is due one week from the missed class.

NOTE: Students who miss more than two classes (for whatever reason) are required to retake the course.

1. Critical Reflection Papers (40%, 8 points per paper) Submit in Moodle by **Wednesday 12:00 Noon** a one to two- page critical reflection paper (single spaced, 12-point type) focused on the summative question(s) and readings of the week. The format of these papers should: articulate key insights in all three of the assigned readings related to the question of the week and then conclude with your own response to the question of the week. Note: Late papers receive a one point grade reduction and must be submitted prior to the next class meeting. (Zero credit if later than that.)

What is revelation? or What is Scripture? (Week 3)

Who is God? How is God related to the world? (Week 5)

Who is Jesus Christ? How does Jesus make a difference? (Week 7)

Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the Spirit's work in the world, the church, the Christian life? (Week 8—This will be a creative project accompanied by a brief interpretive paragraph explaining how the project is informed by the readings of the week and what the project expresses about the Spirit.)

What is the church and what is its calling? (Week 9)

2. Reading Questions on Moodle (20%, 4 points each)

Each week that has no paper due (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 11, and 12), students will give a written response to questions designed to guide reading and facilitate discussion. **Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by Thursday at noon.** These cannot be turned in after the relevant class session as they are primarily designed to facilitate discussion in the current class session. (Zero credit for late submissions.)

4. Statement of Faith (10%) All students will develop a one-page (single-spaced) Statement of Faith in which they express the basic theological convictions of the Christian faith. The first draft will be posted and presented in class **Week 9** and a final draft that responds to teaching team comments will be posted on **Thursday of Exam Week (Week 13)**. Faculty will offer comments on the earlier draft but will not assign a grade until all drafts are complete.

5. Term paper (30%)

Task: Students will write a term paper dealing with a topic or issue related to one of the class sessions. The paper will explore and argue for a theological understanding of the issue / topic. The first half of the paper should present the issue and the perspectives of two theologians' (using required texts of the session and additional research from library sources). The second half of the paper should evaluate these resources and develop an informed and constructive argument stating your own perspective on the topic.

Format: This is to be a 12-15 page paper (double-spaced, 12-point type, one inch margins, with standard footnote citations and a bibliography). The paper follows the prescribed editorial guidelines; observes MTS rules of documentation and quotations; is written with clarity with

proper sentence and paragraph construction. A footnote should explain any exceptions to McCormick Seminary's inclusive language guidelines.

Submission: The final paper should be **submitted through the Turnitin "test site" on Wednesday of Week 10**. If there are no issues of citation arising, you may proceed to **submit this as the final copy through the Turnitin "final copy" site**. If citation issues arise you have until **Wednesday of Week 13 (Exam Week)** to make the submission.

EXPECTATIONS FOR EACH OTHER

1. Be informed by and follow the general policies and procedures of McCormick as stated in our official documents (McCormick's Catalog, Advisory System Handbook, and Student Handbook) and the class syllabus.
2. Contribute to a positive, supportive, hospitable, and mutual learning and social environment in which we can share and develop our diverse experiences and gifts.
3. Express convictions in appropriate ways and show respect, openness, and sensitivity, especially in times of disagreement.
4. Contribute to a learning and social environment that promotes the core goals and values of McCormick:
 - a. the formation of women and men for Christian ministerial leadership in the contemporary church and world;
 - b. a theological education informed by Reformed tradition in our ecumenical, cross-cultural, and urban contexts;
 - c. a curriculum that seeks academic excellence, professional development, and spiritual formation;
 - d. a social and institutional environment that is respectful and inclusive of human diversity in all the variety of social life today.
5. Benefit from the resources and advisement of a teaching team and Moodle, seeking to learn from the team and each other.

TYPICAL FLOW OF EVENTS IN CLASS SESSIONS (6:00 – 8:50 p.m.)

6:00 – 7:30 Session One
 7:30 -- 7:45 Break
 7:45 – 8:50 Session Two

The class is divided into discussion groups who will each have an Educational Assistant leader. Discussions and class leadership responsibilities will be coordinated by the EA's, and Moodle posts and make-up papers will be read and evaluated by them as well (with the guidance of the teaching faculty.)

Two or three of the class sessions will be combined with Intro to Ethics for a special evening Science Event with a guest speaker who is a person of faith engaging science.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS & ASSIGNMENTS

Feb. 7 WEEK ONE: What is theology and why does it matter?

Prayer & welcome. Introductions.
 Orientation to the course and resources
 Presentations and discussion

Feb 14 WEEK TWO: What are the methods and sources for doing theology?

Readings:

Migliore, Ch. 1 (19pp) or González, Ch. 1 (22pp)
 Cone, Ch. 1 (~21pp)
 Johnson, Ch. 1-3 (~56pp)

NOTE: As you read each week, make a note of terms that you do not understand, and look them up using your theological dictionary or library resources. For some weeks, we'll post some key terms on Moodle, for you to be especially sure you are familiar with these.

*****MOODLE POSTING DUE (Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by 12:00 on Thursday at noon.)**

Available on Moodle (in English only), optional but recommended for those with older editions: Freire and Cone foreword and preface to 1986 edition, and Cone postscript to 2010 edition, of 'A Black Theology of Liberation.'

Feb. 21 WEEK THREE: What is revelation? What is Scripture?

Readings:

Migliore, Ch. 2-3 (44pp)
 or Juan Luis Segundo, "Revelación, Fe, Signos de los Tiempos" (24pp, on Moodle)
 Cone, Ch. 2-3 (~36pp)
 Johnson, Ch. 5 (~28pp)

*****REFLECTION PAPER DUE (Due in Moodle by Wednesday 12:00 Noon)**

ON MOODLE: Optional for further study: Case-Winters, "Sola Scriptura: Then and Now"

Feb. 28 WEEK FOUR: How is God related to the world? Creation and Providence
Readings:

Migliore, Ch. 5 (25pp)

or González Ch. 3 (22pp)

Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, pp.35-49 of chapter 2, 'An Ecological View of the Cosmos: Our Contemporary Story' (on Moodle),or Leonardo Boff, *Ecología: Grito de la Tierra, Grito de los Pobres*, pp.53-69 de capítulo 2, 'Una Cosmovisión Ecológica: La Narración Actual' (en Moodle).John Haught, *Christianity and Science: Toward a Theology of Nature*, chapter 4, 'What's Going on in the Universe?' (14pp, on Moodle)or John Haught, *Cristianismo y ciencia: Hacia una teología de la naturaleza*, capítulo 4, 'Qué acontece en el universo?' (18pp, en Moodle.)**SCIENCE EVENT: The Evolving Universe****GRACE WOLF-CHASE, Senior Astronomer of the Adler Planetarium**

*****MOODLE POSTING DUE (Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by 12:00 on Thursday at noon.)**

Mar. 7 WEEK FIVE: What do we mean by God? Who is God?
Readings:

Migliore, Ch. 4

or González Ch.2

Cone, Ch. 4

Johnson, 6, 9, and 10

*****REFLECTION PAPER DUE (Due in Moodle by Wednesday 12:00 Noon)**

Mar. 14 WEEK SIX: Who are we as human beings? What's wrong with us?

Migliore, Chs. 6 and 7 (~45pp)

or Leonardo Boff, *Ecología: Grito de la Tierra, Grito de los Pobres*, pp.69-83 de capítulo 2, 'Una Cosmovisión Ecológica: La Narración Actual' (en Moodle),and Nancy Bedford, *Nuestra Fe: Una Introducción a la teología cristiana*, capítulo 6, '¿Por Qué un Dios Bueno Permite el Mal y el Pecado?' (11pp) (en Moodle),

and re-read González ch.3, just sections 3-5 (pp.60-73)

Cone, Ch. 5 (~29pp)

Johnson, Ch. 4 (~15pp)

*****MOODLE POSTING DUE (Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by 12:00 on Thursday at noon.)**

POSTED: **Optional** for further study: Andrew Park, *The Wounded Heart of God*, Intro and Ch. 1

READING WEEK: MARCH 18-22 NO CLASS

Mar. 28 WEEK SEVEN: Who is Jesus Christ? How does Jesus make a difference?**Readings:**

Migliore, Ch. 8 & 9 (60pp) **or** González Ch. 4 (20pp)

Cone, Ch. 6 (21pp)

Johnson, Ch. 8 (20pp)

*****REFLECTION PAPER DUE (Due in Moodle by Wednesday 12:00 Noon)**

**April 4 WEEK EIGHT: Who is the Holy Spirit?
(Presenters: All students)****Reading:**

Migliore, Ch. 10 (25pp)

or (en Moodle) Jose Comblin, "El Espíritu Santo"

Johnson, Ch. 7 (26pp)

*****HOLY SPIRIT PROJECT AND INTERPRETATION DUE (PRESENTATIONS UNTIL 8:00)**

*****STATEMENT OF FAITH, FIRST DRAFT DUE (SHARING STATEMENTS IN GROUPS)**

April 11 WEEK NINE: What is the Church? How do we understand the sacraments?**Readings:**

Migliore, Ch. 11-12 (53pp)

or González, Ch. 5-6 (43pp)

Cone, Ch. 7 (~15pp)

Ignacio Ellacuria, "The Crucified People" / "El Pueblo Crucificado" (posted on Moodle in English and Spanish)

*****REFLECTION PAPER DUE (Due in Moodle by Wednesday 12:00 Noon)**

**April 18 WEEK TEN FINAL PAPER IS DUE WEDNESDAY – NO CLASS THIS WEEK
(MAUNDY THURSDAY)**

April 25 WEEK ELEVEN: Where are we going?

Readings:

Migliore, Ch. 14

or González Ch. 7

Jürgen Moltmann, "New Heaven – New Earth: Cosmic Eschatology" in *The Coming of God* (259-280) (on Moodle)

or Moltmann, "Nuevo cielo, nueva tierra. Escatología cósmica," in *La Venida de Dios* (331-356) (en Moodle)

Ron Cole-Turner, "Eschatology and the Technologies of Human Enhancement," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 70:1 (2016), 21-33, and "Theosis and Human Enhancement," *Theology and Science*, 16:3 (2018), 330-342 (en Moodle)

or Nancy Bedford and Guillermo Hansen. "X. ¿Qué Esperamos?" en *Nuestra fe: una introducción a la teología cristiana*. Buenos Aires: Inst. Universitario ISEDET, 2008. (en Moodle)

SCIENCE EVENT: The Human Future

Ron Cole Turner, Prof. of Theology and Ethics, Pittsburgh Seminary

*****MOODLE POSTING DUE (Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by 12:00 on Thursday at noon.)**

May 2 WEEK TWELVE: What is "the Good News" for our ecumenical and religiously pluralistic era?

Readings:

World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and World Evangelical Alliance. 2011. "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct". (Published in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 35(4), 194-196). (On Moodle, in English and Spanish.)

World Council of Churches. *Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community*. Geneva: WCC Publ, 1992. (The whole thing is on Moodle, in English and Spanish, but **read only chapters 1-4.**)

OPTIONAL: Migliore, Ch.13

*****MOODLE POSTING DUE (Entries are due Wednesday at 12:00 noon and each person should respond to two entries by 12:00 on Thursday at noon.)**

May 9, WEEK THIRTEEN EXAM WEEK: In Your Own Theological Voice

**STATEMENT OF FAITH, FINAL DRAFT DUE TUESDAY, MAY 8
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE (SUBMIT TO THE "FINAL COPY" SITE) ON TURNITIN,
TUESDAY, MAY 8 by 6:00.**