

TEC 3070 – Systematic Theology Online Syllabus

Spring 2021 Thursdays, 8:00 – 9:30pm Central Time

Instructor Information

Instructor

Dr. JoAnne Marie Terrell

Email

joannemterrell@aol.com

Office Location & Hours

Available By Appointment

Teaching Assistant

Terence Mayo

Email

terence.mayo@ctsichicago.edu

Office Location & Hours

Available By Appointment

General Information

Course Description

The nature of theological thinking and theological method.

Course Objectives

After completing the course in Systematic Theology, students should be able to: 1. Employ basic theological vocabulary (MD 4.1, MA 1, MA 3, MR 2); 2. Outline historical shifts in the elucidation of Western Christianity (MD 1.2; MA 1, MA 3); 3. Identify major doctrines commonly held within ecumenical Christianity (MD 1.2, MD 3.2; MA 2, MA 3) and 4. Compare these to the basic doctrinal positions in Judaism and/or Islam (MD 1.2, MD 1.4; MA 1, MA 2, MA 3); and 5. Summarize the major writings of a principal interpreter of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam (MD 1, MD 2.1, MD 3.1, MD 3.2; MA 1, MA 2, MA 3, MR 2, MR 5).

Student Learning Outcomes

These course objectives contribute to the following student learning outcomes:

MDiv Learning Outcomes

MD 1 – *Develop Critical Thinking*

MD 1.1 – Demonstrate knowledge of the Bible; knowledge of its history, tradition, and methods of interpretation; and the capacity to bring scriptural wisdom into critical engagement with current crises and opportunities.

MD 1.2 – Demonstrate knowledge of historical, systematic, and constructive theology, and the capacity to bring theological insight into critical engagement with current crises and opportunities.

MD 1.3 – Demonstrate knowledge of multiple cultural contexts and capacity for critical theological reflection that takes contextual issues seriously.

MD 1.4 – Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to critically engage with at least one tradition other than Christianity.

MD 2 – *Cultivate Compassionate Connection*

MD 2.1 – Engage and collaborate across lines of difference, privilege and power.

MD 3 – *Promote Ethical-Spiritual Integrity*

MD 3.1 – Engage in sustained, critical, and effective theological and ethical reflection on the practice of ministry in the parish and other contexts.

MD 3.2 – Seek greater and greater coherence between one's publicly stated beliefs and values and one's personal and communal practices.

MD 4 – *Support Concrete Strategic Action*

MD 4.1 – Communicate effectively, orally and in written form, both interpersonally and publicly.

MD 4.2 – Demonstrate ability to identify and analyze social structures of oppression and to propose and implement strategies of change.

MA Learning Outcomes

MA 1 – Students will apply foundational knowledge of religious traditions appropriately in scholarly research.

MA 2 – Students will demonstrate ability to construct and develop a substantial scholarly argument in religious studies.

MA 3 – Students will demonstrate ability to think and write critically about religious traditions.

MARL Learning Outcomes

MR 2 – Demonstrate knowledge of biblical, historical, and religious traditions.

MR 5 – Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively, orally and in written form.

For each degree program represented, the student's ability to articulate clearly (orally and written) her/his own and others' perspectives examined in the readings and course materials will be the primary criteria for evaluation.

Course Expectations

The course is divided into two parts, Foundations (Part I) and Doctrine (Part II).

Part I – Foundations: During our study of the Foundations of Systematic Theology, the class will engage in research and help create a historical timeline as part of a special project of the Seminary connected to the Science for Seminaries Grant that CTS was awarded in 2020 (NB: Read the **AAAS Special Announcement on CANVAS**). The full class will meet for a total of three (3) scheduled plenary Zoom sessions, **04 February, 25 February and 11 March**. There are three (3) Sections of the class; students from each Section will be divided into two (2) groups during the first plenary session, for a total of six (6) groups. Each week, prior to the subsequent plenary Zoom sessions, all students will research aspects of the historical timeline as directed in the course outline of the syllabus and collectively select entries for the historical timeline. Since this is, in many respects, an asynchronous online course, each student should write down insights gained from their research as well as the assigned readings in order to contribute to the writing of collective *critical summaries* and *critical reflections* on selected passages. To accomplish this, students are also required to meet independently for 45-60 minutes with their group members at agreed upon dates and times during the weeks of **04-10 February, 18-24 February and 04-10 March**. The Course Assistant will help each group coordinate meeting dates and times. During these independent sessions, the groups will collectively write either a *critical summary* or a *critical reflection* on selected texts, connecting them to the completed research and giving knowledgeable, fluid interpretation of theological discourses. **Each group should designate an Administrator and host of the independent Zoom sessions.**

During the independent Zoom sessions and the breakout discussions of the plenary sessions, *substantively engage your group members by asking for clarification, highlighting similarities and dissimilarities between your points of view, and articulating what new theological insights or directions emerge for you from the readings and ongoing discussion.*

Directions for the proper formatting of a *critical summary* versus a *critical reflection* are provided on CANVAS. The required format is indicated on the syllabus.

(MD 1, MD 2, MD 3, MD, 4, MA 1, MA 2, MA 3, MR 2, MR 5) [35%]

Part II – Doctrine: During our study of Doctrine, all students will research and outline the theological anthropological implications of the doctrinal loci of Systematic Theology as directed each week. Again, the full class will meet for a total of three (3) Zoom sessions, **25 March, 22 April and 06 May**. During the plenary session on **25 March, the Professor and Course Assistant will conduct a “check-in” to monitor our progress with respect to the scholarly and creative aspects of the project goals.** The groups may be reconstituted at that time but will continue to meet in breakout sessions during the plenary sessions. During the weeks prior to the plenary sessions, students should be reading the course material, reviewing media on Canvas and writing down and posting the insights gained from their research as well as the assigned readings. Students will collectively critically *summarize* or *reflect* on selected texts, connecting their *summaries* and *reflections* to completed research. During the breakout sessions, *substantively engage your group members, for example, by asking questions for clarification, highlighting your personal points of view or the range of doctrinal interpretations (stated or implied) in your religious communities.*

(MD 1, MD 2, MD 3, MD, 4, MA 1, MA 2, MA 3, MR 2, MR 5) [35%]

The collectively written critical **summaries** and critical **reflections** will aid in the completion of the Final Exam.

Final Examination

Thursday, 06 May, a **take home, open book Final Examination on Foundations and Doctrine** will be distributed. It will cover the lectures and readings throughout the course. **UPLOAD your completed final examination to the CANVAS Dropbox by 11:59 pm Central Time, Thursday, 13 May (graduating students, distribution date: 29 April, due date: 06 May)**. (MD 1.4, MD 2.1, MD 3.2, MD 4.2; MA 2, MA 3; MR 2, MR 5)

NB: THE USE OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL WRITTEN WORK UNLESS YOU ARE DIRECTLY QUOTING THE PRIMARY SOURCES. (MD 1.3, MD 2.1, MD 4.2) [5%]

Grading Criteria:

Final grades will be based on the accumulation of 100 points:

A = 100-93	A- = 92-90	B+ = 89- 87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-77	C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-6

Plagiarism policy – Refer to Student Handbook

Course Materials

Required Books:

- James H. Cone. *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986, 1990, Kindle). ISBN: 978-1-57075-895-9 – **BTL**
- _____ . *God of the Oppressed* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1975, Kindle). ISBN: 1-57075-158-7 – **GOD**
- Miguel De La Torre, ed. *A Handbook of U.S. Theologies of Liberation* (Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2004). ISBN: 978-0-827214-48-0 – **HTL**
- Van A. Harvey. *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1997). ISBN: 0-684-84644-6- **HTT (For Reference Use)**
- Aysha Hidayatullah. *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, Kindle). ISBN: 978-0-19-935956 – **FEQ**
- Kwok, Pui-lan, ed. *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010, Kindle). ISBN: 978-1-57075-880-5 – **HAI**
- Alister McGrath. *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Lynchburg: Blackwell Publishing, 2011, Kindle). ISBN: 978-1-4443-3514-9 – **CTI**
- Judith Plaskow. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism From a Feminist Perspective* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). ISBN: 0-06-66684-6 – **SAS**
- JoAnne Marie Terrell. *Power in the Blood? The Cross in the African American Experience* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005). ISBN: 1-57075-216-8 - **PIB**

Recommended Books (Optional):

- Christopher Morse. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*, Second Edition (New York: Continuum Books, 2009).
- Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, eds. *Handbook of Christian Theology*, Second Edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003, Kindle).

- Letty Russell and J.S. Clarkson, eds. *Dictionary of Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

Course Schedule

Part I – FOUNDATIONS

Each week, students will complete the assigned readings, deliberate on a passage designated from the readings, and listen to lectures or review other media, in order to attend the plenary and independent Zoom sessions fully prepared to discuss. Students will bring their notes and insights to their groups in order to write collective critical *summaries* and *reflections* during the Zoom breakout sessions. Refer to either document, “*How to Write a Critical Summary*” or “*How to Write a Critical Reflection*.” Finally, students will research selected topics that will assist them in the creation of the historical timeline.

Week 1

Thursday, 04 February

ZOOM Session 8:00 - 9:30pm Central Time

***Introductory matters

***Reading Assignment: CTI: Preface, Part I; BTL

“Anyone who thinks about the great questions of Christian Theology soon finds out that a lot of them have already been addressed. It is virtually impossible to do theology as if it had never been done before. There is always an element of looking over one’s shoulder to see how things were done in the past, and what answers were then given. Part of the notion of ‘tradition’ is a willingness to take seriously the theological heritage of the past.” (CTI, p. 3)

***Research topics: The European Roots of the Enlightenment and the Construction of Race

Week 2

Thursday, 11 February

***Lecture: Theology and Context

***Reading Assignment: GOD: Preface, chapters 1,2,4,5

“There are two reasons why black theology is Christian theology. First, there can be no theology of the gospel which does not arise from an oppressed community. This is so because God is revealed in Jesus as a God whose righteousness is inseparable from the weak and helpless in human society. The goal of black theology is to interpret God’s activity as related to the oppressed black community. Secondly, black theology is Christian because it centers on Jesus Christ. There can be no Christian theology which does not have Jesus Christ as its point of departure. Though black theology affirms the black condition as the primary datum of reality to be reckoned with, this does not mean it denies the absolute revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Rather it affirms it.” (BTL, p. 5)

***Research topics: The Roots of Black Intellectual Resistance; Abolitionism

Week 3

Thursday, 18 February

***Lecture: Evangelicalism, Enlightenment, and Liberalism

***Reading Assignment: CTI Part II; PIB: chapter 2

***Write: Building on the research of the previous weeks, each student should write down their insights in order to contribute to a collective *critical summary* of Chapter 2 of PIB during the breakout sessions on **25 February. Due by 11:59pm, CT.**

“Scripture gave to the slaves points of identification with Jesus and other biblical victims. The theodical thrust of its stories functioned to establish a compensatory mechanism in black and American religiosity that mitigated class conflict between (the many) poor and (the few) wealthy whites. Evangelical preaching – emphasizing sin, salvation and

the need by all for conversion – gave an egalitarian dimension to the character of American worship, to which the revolutionary fervor of the settlers gave social impetus and a political basis. Owing in part to this egalitarian impulse in Evangelicalism, African Americans responded by converting (from Islam and indigenous religions) to Christianity in large numbers during the first Great Awakening (1730-1760) in the nation's religious consciousness.” (PIB, p. 37)

*****Research Topics:** Evangelicalism; The Great Awakenings; The Theological Anthropology of the American Slavocracy; The Emergence of the Modern Era; The Rise of Historical Criticism; Fundamentalism; Revivalism

Week 4

Thursday, 25 February

*****Lecture:** The Social Gospel, Neo-Orthodoxy, Liberation Theologies, and Indigenous Women's Theologies

*****Reading Assignment:** GOD: ch. 7; PIB: chs. 3-4; HAI

“The bodies that suffer are thus those who know [suffering] as opposed to the primacy of historically laudable mediators of knowledge, translators of experience, and codifiers of faith. And they are mothers, wives, daughters, sisters who are victims and survivors of familial violence in the form of female infanticide, incest, dowry deaths, honor killings, domestic violence (which includes marital rape); communal and military violence in the mass rape of women from ethnic minorities, outcast (i.e., Dalit of India)...it is women's bodies constructed as repositories and markers of ethnic, cultural, and religious boundaries that result in women's greater vulnerability to racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance which not only affect women in different ways and degrees from men but also exacerbate gender-based violence. (HAI)

*****Research Topics:** Western Empire, Technology and Theological Anthropology; Liberalism, Modernity and Postmodernity

Week 5

Thursday, 04 March

*****Lecture:** Jewish Feminism

*****Reading Assignment:** SAS

“Each of these suggestions for ritualizing religious and political values – and each of the communities out of which they arise represents an attempt that would resist the forces that would separate faith from worldly involvement: the cultural opposition of religion and politics, the Marxist understanding of religion as a reactionary diversion from the battle against injustice, the lure of oases of spiritual experimentation in the midst of a world desperately in need of redemption. Each challenges us as feminists and as Jews to bring our spirituality and politics together in such a way that our religious lives change the way we live, and our political commitments shape our spirituality. To build community, to work for political change, is to act out the spiritual vision of a world in which diverse communities can live together and learn from each other, each with the resources it needs to survive and mature.” (SAS, p. 237).

*****Research Topic:** Christian Religious Supremacy and the Machinery of War

Week 6

Thursday, 11 March

*****Lecture:** The Rise of Islam

*****Reading Assignment:** Sally Mallam, “The Life of Muhammad.” “Judaism and Christianity in the Qur'an.”

<https://humanjourney.us/ideas-that-shaped-our-modern-world-section/history-of-mohammad/>

<https://humanjourney.us/judaism-and-christianity-in-the-quran/>

*****Write:** Building on the research of the previous weeks, each student should write down their insights in order to contribute to a collective *critical reflection* on HAI, during the breakout sessions on **25 March. Due by 11:59pm, CT.** While constructing this particular reflection, be attentive to gender-based violence in Jewish women's experience as well, and make explicit connections to Islamophobia as a form of social and political violence that perpetuates the current map of geo-political instability around the globe.

(Citing Idries Shah): *“In stating that there would be no prophet after Muhammad, Islam in its sociological sense reflected the human consciousness that the age of the rise of new theocratic systems was at an end. The events of the succeeding fifteen hundred years have shown this to be only too true. It is, for reasons of the development of society as*

we have it today, inconceivable that new religious teachers of the caliber of the founders of world religions should attain any prominence comparable to that achieved by Zoroaster, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.”

*****Research Topics:** Christian Religious Supremacy; Divinity and Masculinity

Week 7

Thursday, 18 March *****READING WEEK***NO CLASS***READING WEEK***NO CLASS***READING WEEK*****

Part II – DOCTRINE

In Part II of the course, students will reflect collectively and critically on doctrinal issues. When reflecting on doctrinal issues:

- *First, recap what the author/s is/are saying about the doctrine in question.*
- *Incorporate information shared in the Power Points and other supplemental material in your summation of the readings.*
- *Then, reflect on how the doctrine (as explicated by the authors we are reading) either refutes or confirms what you understand, or what you confess as part of a faith community. Estimate the ways in which the doctrine in question functions in other religious communities, both within and outside of your broad tradition.*
- *Address the doctrine’s relative importance to your personal beliefs and list any questions that emerged for you from your reflection on the materials*

Week 08

Thursday, 25 March

*****ZOOM Session*** 8:00 - 9:30pm Central Time – plenary check-in**

*****Lecture and Power Point Presentation:** The Doctrine of God

*****Reading Assignment:** CTI, ch. 7; HTL, ch. 1

Week 09

Thursday, 08 April

*****Lecture:** The Doctrine of Revelation (Word of God)

*****Reading Assignment:** FEQ; GOD, chs. 6-8; CTI, ch. 6; HTL, ch. 7

*****Assignment Due:** Individual Research Essay

Week 10

Thursday, 15 April

*****Discuss:** The Doctrine of Revelation

*****Lecture:** The Doctrines of Christology (Jesus Christ) and Soteriology (Salvation)

*****Reading Assignment:** HTL chs. 6, 9; PIB, ch. 5; HTL, ch. 2

*****Write:** Building on the research of the previous weeks, students should write down their insights in order to contribute to a collective *critical reflection* on the Doctrine of Christology or Soteriology, during the breakout session on **Thursday, 22 April**. Due by 11:59pm.

Week 11

Thursday, 22 April

*****ZOOM Session*** 8:00 - 9:30pm Central Time**

*****Discuss:** The Doctrine of Christology/Soteriology

*****Lecture:** The Doctrine of Humanity

*****Reading Assignment:** CTI, ch. 13; HTL, ch. 5

Week 12

Thursday, 29 April

ZOOM Session AAAS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ***TBA

***View PowerPoint: The Doctrine of Eschatology (Last Things)

***Read and reflect: HTL ch. 11, CTI ch. 16

Week 13

Thursday, 06 May

ZOOM Session 8:00 - 9:30pm Central Time – FINAL EXAMINATION REVIEW

***Final Examination Distributed

***Upload Final Examination to CANVAS by 11:59 pm, Thursday, 13 May