

COURSE DESCRIPTION



This course is an invitation for students to deepen in their understanding of God the Trinity whom Christians witness through their lives. It offers a critical and constructive reflection on the divine Trinitarian communion—a plenitude of self-giving love—in the light of salvation, liberation, and mission. D4100 is informed by the perspectives of the practice of ministry, theological method, the contextual and intercultural nature of theology, and the history of doctrine.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the major issues surrounding the discussion of the nature of the Christian God in Systematic Theology (MDiv 2.1,2.6; MAPS 2.1; MA 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.3)
2. To be able to appropriate the traditional Christian understanding of God on a personal level (MDiv 1.2, 1.3; MAPS 1.2, 1.3; MA 1.2, 1.3)
3. To engage in theological reflection that takes into account the varying hues of cultures and religious perspectives (MDiv 2.1; MAPS 2.1; MA 1.8, 2.1)
4. To engage various theological methods in understanding one's faith in the Christian God (MA 1.4, 2.2, 2.3)
5. To acquire skills in theological reflection and in the communication of the Christian doctrine of God in ways that are effective and relevant (MDiv 1.6, 2.4, 2.6; MAPS 1.1, 3.3; MA 1.1)

METHOD & REQUIREMENTS

In view of the diversity of learning styles represented in the classroom, the course follows an imaginative multimodal approach that includes lectures, breakout groups, online discussion boards, book review, critical film screenings, and final oral exams. Students have the opportunity to engage audiovisual and digital modes of learning in addition to the traditional linguistic/text-based approaches.

The course requirements are as follows:

- **Involved participation in class discussions**

This is expected of both credit and audit students. Please inform the professor by email should an absence be unavoidable.

- **Involved participation in two (2) online discussion boards**

Based on classroom film screenings. Specific guidelines to be announced.

- **Short Reaction Paper**

Based on a public lecture (Feb. 10, Monday, 4:00-5:00 PM) that will take the place of the class. Specific guidelines to be announced.

- **Final Paper**

A two-part paper consisting a book review based on selected chapters of Elizabeth Johnson's book *She Who Is* (2005), and an integrative section that interweaves Trinitarian Theology and Ministry context.

Paper length: 12 pages / 3,000 words (MA-Academic: 16 pages / 4,000 words)

Double-spaced/Times New Roman or equivalent/font size 12

Due date: April 6, 2020

Specific guidelines to be announced.

Please be informed of CTU's policies regarding academic writing and plagiarism. Refer to "Statement on Academic Integrity" below.

EVALUATION

- 50% Final Paper
- 30% Online Discussions, Reaction Paper
- 20% Overall Class Participation

Participants are expected to attend all sessions and participate in discussions.

Kindly note that as a policy, I do not allow recording of my lectures, neither do I loan out DVDs to students.

Grades are given as follows:

- A = outstanding contribution
- B = good contribution
- C = acceptable contribution
- D = failure to complete 1/3 of requirements
- F = failure to complete
- I = incomplete

TEXTBOOKS

Available on Amazon.com

Required

Johnson, Elizabeth. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York: Continuum Press, 2007.

_____, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 2017.

Gerald O'Collins, *Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, 2nd ed. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014.

Recommended

Boff, Leonardo. *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Ratzinger, Joseph (Pope Benedict XVI), *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008.

* Note: recommended bibliography/references can be found on a reserve shelf at the front desk of the Bechtold Library under the heading **DC4100 Trinity & Mission: The God of Jesus Christ**

COURSE CALENDAR

I. Ground Rules for the Journey

Required Reading

Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York: Continuum Press, 2007, chapters. 1-2.

Edward Schillebeeckx, "Prologue: Human God-Talk and God's Silence" in Mary Catherine Hilkert and Robert Schreiter, eds. *The Praxis of the Reign of God*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2002, x-xviii.

Recommended Viewing

"Astronomy, Religion, and the Art of Storytelling"

Brother Guy Consolmagno, SJ

Director of the Vatican Observatory

President of the Vatican Observatory Foundation

One thing astronomy and religion have in common is that they are both interested in the big questions; and they depend on the art of storytelling to present their strange and wonderful ideas in ways that people can understand, appreciate, and evaluate. We'll examine why stories are fundamental to our understanding of religion; when being a good storyteller is essential in doing science; and how way we tell these stories influences how we think about the big ideas.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/9M4fgGA5rJMdTt4GSiQP/full>

II. Starting Point: God & the Ecumene of Suffering (Theodicy Question)

Required Reading

Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, ch. 3.

Dorothee Soelle, "A Critique of Christian Masochism" in *Suffering*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975, 9-32.

Johann Baptist Metz, "On the Way to a Postidealist Theology" in *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley. New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1998, 30-53.

Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981, 74-96.

Edward Schillebeeckx. "Doubt in God's Omnipotence: When Bad Things Happen to Good People" in *For the Sake of the Gospel*. New York: Crossroad, 1990, 88-102.

III. God & the Ecumene of Suffering

Title to be Announced

Film Screening in class; Discussion Board online.

IV. The God of the Reign

Required Reading

Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, ch. 4

Edward Schillebeeckx, "The Message of Jesus" in Robert Schreiter, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984, 136-146.

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God" in *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Adrian J. Walker. New York: Doubleday, 2007, 46-63.

Sobrino, Jon. "Jesus' Proclamation of the Reign of God: Importance for Today" in *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Recommended Reading

Edward Schillebeeckx, "Human Experience and Suffering" in Robert Schreiter, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 51-59.

Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, chs. 5-6.

Gerhard Lohfink, "Jesus' Miracles" in *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012, 128-152.

V. God the Holy Spirit

Required Reading

Jose Comblin, "The Holy Spirit" in *Sobrino and Ellacuria*, eds. Systematic Theology, 146-164.

Gerald O'Collins, *Tripersonal God* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014), 165-173.

Kirsteen Kim, *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007, v.-8.

Karl Rahner, "The Holy Spirit" in *The Content of Faith*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992, 355-374.

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), "Holy Spirit" in *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, 105-113.

Recommended Reading

Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, chapter 9.

"Filioque: A Church Dividing Issue?" (Agreed Statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation). USCCB (2003).

VI. God Creator Spirit: Jesus at the Heart of the Cosmos

Guest Lecturer: Sr. Mary Frohlich, RSCJ

Required Reading

Mary Frohlich, "A Christological Spirituality of Conversion to the Earth" (St. Bernard's School of Theology Convocation, Albany, NY, September 5, 2018)

Elizabeth Johnson, "Jesus and the Cosmos: Soundings in Deep Christology" in Niels Henrik Gregerson, *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2015, 133-156.

Recommended Viewing

How the Universe Works (episode 1): "Big Bang" (2010)

NO CLASS

CTU Reading Week

VII. God the Trinity 1: Trinitarian Doctrine

Required Reading

Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, ch. 10.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna, "Living Trinitarian Faith" in *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, 377-417.

Gerald O'Collins, *Tripersonal God* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014), 85-151.

Recommended Reading

Gerald O'Collins, *Tripersonal God* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014), 11-82.

William C. Placher. "God is Triune- So What?" (Miller Lecture, Valparaiso University, 2003)

VIII. God the Trinity 2: Liberating Trinity

Required Reading

Leonardo Boff, "Trinity" in Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuria, eds. *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993, 75-89.

Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988, 9-24.

Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Crossroad, 1970, rpt. 1997), 9-24. (uploaded on previous week)

Recommended Reading

Pope John Paul I, *Angelus*, September 10, 1978.

Anne Hunt, "The Trinitarian Depths of Vatican II" in *Theological Studies* 1, vol. 74 (March 2013): 3-19.

IX. Trinity & Mission: Contextual Models

Required Reading

Stephen Bevans, "Contextual Methods" in *Theology in Global Perspective: An Introduction*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009, 164-188.

John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio: On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate* (1990), #55-57.

X. Trinity & Inculturation: African Perspectives

Required Reading

Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, "The Mad Preacher and the Three Persons in One God" in *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*. New York: Orbis Books, 2008, 1-36.

Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004, chapter 9.

John Paul II, *The Church in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation* (1995), chapter III, and chapter VII, section 127 only.

Recommended Reading

Peter Schineller, "Inculturation: A Difficult Task" in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (July 1, 1996).

XI. Trinitarian Perichoresis: Exploring Cosmic Perspectives

Required Reading

Elizabeth Johnson, "Chapter 9: Creator Spirit in the Evolving World," *Quest for the Living God*, 181-201.

Guy Consolmagno and Paul Mueller, *Would You Baptize an Extraterrestrial?... and Other Questions from the Astronomers' In-Box at the Vatican Observatory*. NY: Image/Random House, 2014, 249-282

Kames M. Dohm and Shigoneri Maruyama, "Habitable Trinity," *Geoscience Frontiers* 1, vol. 6 (January 2015): 95-101

John Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014, chapter 3.

Required Viewing

"Jill Tarter: Why the search for alien intelligence matters." *TedTalk* (2009).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EszGlvRdgTE&list=PL2FYnX282kUw74FMCTepJMgXdCAECYbgP&index=3&t=0s>

Recommended Reading

Grace Wolfe-Chase, "New Worlds, New Civilizations? From Science Fiction to Science Fact," *Theology and Science*, vol. 16 (2018). <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/9M4fgGA5rJMdTt4GSiQP/full>

Alejandro Garcia-Rivera, "At Home in the Cosmos" in *The Garden of God: A Theological Cosmology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1-22.

John A. Coleman, "Why is the Vatican is Interested in the Search for Life in the Universe?" in *America* (February 25, 2013)

XII. Trinity & Mission: Film Viewing

Title TBA

*Note: all readings outside of the prescribed textbooks are uploaded as pdf on the D2L course site or as links to online sources.

Professor contact info:

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[Syllabus is subject to revision]

CTU MISSION STATEMENT – see Student Handbook page 12 [located in the Helpful Links section of D2L at <https://d2l.ctu.edu>].

COPYRIGHT POLICY – see Student Handbook page 97.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – see Student Handbook

Academic integrity demands that a student acknowledge all sources employed in the preparation of written assignments, whether in the use of exact quotations, or in substantial reproduction of ideas. Failure to do so (plagiarism) will result in a failing grade for the course and may also result in dismissal.

Grading Scale – See Student Handbook Section 4 at page 33

EXPECTATIONS

Bias-Free Language – see Student Handbook Section 4 at page 29

Netiquette and Nethics – See Student Handbook Section 4 beginning at page 35

[Individual Faculty members may add expectations: e.g., attendance, no food, use of cell phones, etc.]

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Library Hours: <http://www.ctu.lib.il.us/> For information, contact: Kris Veldheer, Library Director, 773-371-5460; kveldheer@ctu.edu English for Theological Education: contact Christina Zaker: czaker@ctu.edu

Writing Handbook: located in the Helpful Links section of D2L at <https://d2l.ctu.edu>.

Writing & Resource Center: There are a number of writing resources available to all CTU students. The Writing and Resource Center is located in room 338 for drop in help with writing and presentation skills. There are also resources available through DePaul University's Writing Center. Please familiarize yourself with the various resources they offer by checking out their web site at: <http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/>.

Student Services: contact Student Service, Room 347; 773-371-5402; or studentservices@ctu.edu

Academic Calendar: <http://www.ctu.edu/academics/academic-calendar>