

APPENDIX 5: Revised courses – faculty report and syllabi

COURSE ONE: DOYLE, FUNDMENTAL THEOLOGY

Report

I revised a core course, *Fundamental Theology*, in line with the objectives of the Science for Seminaries grant: to advance students' understanding of one aspect of the natural sciences—in this case, neuroscience—by (1) including new and substantial sections in the course and (2) inviting recognized experts in the field to present directly to the students and field questions.

This revised course was taught in the fall of 2021 and enrolled 14 students. Two weeks were given over in their entirety to this new material.

Week 8 explored the theme of faith and reason from the perspective of neuroscience. I invited a leading American philosopher of religion, Dr. Nancey Murphy, Professor of Christian Philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. She attended via Zoom, giving a lecture and then leading student discussion. The discussion focused on fundamental methodological issues, especially concerning the competing claims of reductionism and emergence. It was especially helpful to have one of the most incisive and clear thinkers on this issue live in the course, helping students grasp the issues at stake. What was particularly successful in this week was starting the readings with an inconclusive debate between leading neuroscientists on the nature of religious belief in light of neuroscience (Joran Grafman and Andrew Newberg), which set the scene for a clarifying contribution from philosophy—which Dr. Murphy provided very succinctly.

In week 14 on spirituality, we were able to take advantage of our proximity to Cambridge, MA, to host in person Dr. Michael Ferguson, an Instructor in Neurology at Harvard Medical School and director of the Neurospirituality Lab at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Dr. Ferguson gave a compelling PowerPoint lecture on his original research on brain lesions and spirituality, talking students through the methodology and tentative discoveries of his research. The presentation stimulated numerous questions from students. After this event, Dr. Ferguson was invited by the students to present at the graduate research colloquium. These newly forged relationships are, I believe, testament to the sustainability of the work and goals of this grant.

If I were to do this again, I would try to avoid the Zoom format, but obviously that was hard to do given the lingering effects of the pandemic and the understandable reluctance of people to travel (or just arrange travel far in advance) given all the uncertainties.

Syllabus

BOSTON COLLEGE
School of Theology and Ministry

TM700901—Fundamental Theology

Fall 2021
Thursday, 10:00—11:50
9 Lake Street, room 135

Instructor: Dominic Doyle
Office: 9 Lake St, room 328

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Office hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview

This course explores the issues that are fundamental to theological reflection. It addresses basic questions about sources and method that underlie the various branches of theological inquiry. To address these fundamental questions is to explore the conditions for the possibility of doing theology in a coherent way.

The topics central to fundamental theology are, in logical order: [1] Revelation – God’s self-communication; [2] Faith – the human response to divine revelation; [3] Tradition – the transmission of faith’s appropriation of revelation over time (which includes scripture, doctrine, and authority); and [4] Theology – the reflection on the above in a way that is aware of context, clear about method, and open to the self-implication of the inquirer with respect to the subject matter, i.e., open to spiritual transformation and ongoing conversion.

Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- detail the elements central to fundamental theology in the Catholic tradition
- articulate a theology of revelation and faith
- identify some major issues in debates about faith and reason, especially in modernity
- explain the role of Tradition and Scripture in Catholic theology
- give an account of the role of doctrine and teaching authority in the Catholic Church
- assess the influence of cultural context upon theological reflection
- evaluate different theological methods and styles
- explain the basic features of the relationship between spirituality and theology

Schedule of Topics

- 1. Introduction**
Goals for class. Student backgrounds
What is fundamental inquiry? Illustrations from philosophy
- 2. The nature and purpose of theology**
Some definitions
The emergence of fundamental theology and its specific tasks
- 3. The notion of God**
As infinite source of existence and absolute mystery
Talking about God: analogical language
- 4. Human experience and the natural desire for God**
Cognitional operations and authentic human experience
The human as 'open upwards' and inescapably religious
- 5. Revelation**
Basic features, including positions of Vatican I and II
Different models: analogical and dialectical
- 6. Jesus Christ as the fullness of revelation**
God's revelation as *historical*
Historical revelation of *divine* action
- 7. Faith I**
Personal response to revelation, especially conversion
Basis of a new way of life in communion
- 8. Faith II**
Relationship between faith and reason...
With special reference to neuroscience
- 9. Tradition**
Transmission of faith over time
The idea of reception
- 10. Scripture I**
Relationship between tradition and scripture
Inspiration
- 11. Scripture II**
Canon

- Interpretation
12. **Doctrine and authority**
Emergence of doctrine arising out of conflicts of interpretation
Legitimate exercise of teaching authority in addressing these conflicts
 13. **Cultural context and theological styles**
Impact of context upon theological reflection
Examples: academic, liberation, comparative, contemplative
 14. **Theology and spirituality**
The relationship between faith, theology, and spirituality
Neurospirituality

Requirements

- [1] Post two comments on the online discussion board each week in response to the readings – by Thursday 8AM. Your first comment should state what you found most clarifying/inspiring/helpful in the readings; your second comment should state what you found most perplexing/challenging/unhelpful. Each comment should be one or two sentences, with a maximum of 50 words for each comment. [10% of grade.]
- [2] Active participation in class discussion that shows evidence of a close reading and thoughtful evaluation of the readings. Students should be prepared to elaborate on their online comments, respond to the online comments of other students, and answer questions from each other and from the instructor about the content, coherence, and persuasiveness of the readings. [10% of grade.]
- [3] Four analysis essays due shortly after the end of the respective sections on revelation (due Tuesday October 12th at noon), faith (due Tuesday October 26th at noon), tradition/scripture (due Tuesday November 23rd at noon), and theology (due Tuesday December 14th at noon). [20% for each essay.]

Essays must be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins on all sides—no exceptions. The questions and the rubrics used to assess your responses will be uploaded on the course website. No extensions will be granted except for grave reasons, e.g., a documented medical emergency. Late essays will be docked a grade point every day they are late (e.g., a “A-” grade will become a “B+” if it is one day late, a “B” if it is two days late, and so on).

Grading

Grades are assigned according the following criteria that are based on the Academic Policies of Boston College for Graduate Courses.

- A work is *exceptional* in every respect. There is an active and sophisticated engagement with all aspect of the course, demonstrated through careful analysis or creative treatment

of the ideas covered. Both class participation and written work indicate *outstanding* mastery of content, originality of thought clearly expressed, and clarity in connecting course concepts with ministerial and theological interests.

- A- work is *superior* and above the average graduate level expectations. This involves mastery of the course content, recognition of the “big picture” within which course material is situated, and capacity to make cogent links with one’s ministerial and theological position. This level is reflected in the ability to express one’s thoughts effectively in writing and to contribute significantly to class conversation.
- B+ work is *more than satisfactory* at the graduate level. This involves *mastery of the course content* and the ability to draw connections across course topics and with appropriate theological and ministerial topics. Contribution to class conversation gives evidence of both active listening and thoughtful participation. *Written work is clear, focused and well organized.*
- B work is clearly *satisfactory* at the graduate level. There is consistent engagement with, and a basic mastery of, the course material with a good command of the various topics.
- B- work is *barely acceptable* at the graduate level. This reflects a basic command of the course material, an adequate articulation of the connections across content areas, and a basic recognition of the implications for pastoral work.
- C work is *marginally acceptable* at the graduate level. This is a basic mastery of most of the course materials but not all. It represents that you have slipped below an acceptable level of work in one or two areas.
- F work is *unsatisfactory* and fails to meet the requirements of the course.

Class attendance policy

STM Policy:

- In order to complete and achieve successfully the objectives of an STM course, students must attend the course meetings in order to engage the professor and fellow students in the teaching and learning dynamic. Unless other arrangements are made with the instructor, a student must withdraw from a course in which he or she has been absent for any reason for 25% or more of class meeting time. If a student with 25% or greater absence rate does not withdraw from the course, the student will be given a failing grade for the course.

Additional policy applied to this class:

- Students will be excused only for grave reasons, e.g., a documented medical emergency or serious family obligation.
- One unexcused absence will result in a grade point reduction in your participation grade (requirements 1 and 2). A second unexcused absence will result in a grade point reduction in your final grade for the class (e.g. if your final grade is calculated as an “A-”, it will become a “B+”).
- Students missing a class for a non-grave reason will write up a one page (single-spaced) summary of the key points of all the readings for the week (or incur a further grade point reduction in your final grade for the class.)

COURSE BOOKS AND ARTICLES

The following book can be purchased online or at the Boston College bookstore. It is also on reserve at the STM library.

- Gerald O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2011)

Remaining readings are posted on the course website or are online (the link is on the course website).

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

Sep 2 Introduction

Week 1

Optional Reading:

Dominic Doyle, "Transposing Richard McKeon's Philosophic Pluralism into a Theological Key." In *New Voices in Catholic Theology*, eds. Anna Bonta Moreland and Joseph Curran (Crossroad/Herder and Herder, 2012), 71–84.

Sept 9 The nature and purpose of theology

Week 2

Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 7–24.

Gerald O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* [hereafter *RFT*] (Oxford University Press, 2011), v–ix, 1–17 [= ch. 1 "History, Terms, Identity, and Themes"]

International Theological Commission, "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria," *Origins* 41 (2012): 640–61.

Optional Reading:

Mary Ann Donovan, "The Vocation of the Theologian," *Theological Studies*, 65 (2004):3–22.

Joseph Dore, "Theology's Responsibility and Tasks in Today's Church and World," *Theological Studies* 65 (2004): 699-713.

Sept 16 The notion of God

Week 3

Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1991), 2–9 [=ch.1 "Creation"].

O'Collins, *RFT*, 18–36 [=ch.2 "Faith in a Personal God"]

John Wright, "God." In *New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987), 423–436.

W. Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 212–222 [=ch.14 "The Final Unification of All Being: The Search for the Ultimate Source of All Being" (selection)]

Optional Reading:

Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 65–67, 72–93 [=ch.3 "The Heart of the Matter: What God is (Not)"].

Sept 23 Human experience and the natural desire for God Week 4

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #27–#49. [=Part 1, section 1, ch.1 “Man’s Capacity for God”]
O’Collins, *RFT*, 37–55 [=ch.3 “The Human Condition”].

Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1971), 3–25, 101–105
[=ch.1 “Method” and ch.4 “Religion” (selection)].

Optional Reading:

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 14–39.

John O’Donnell, “The Mystery of Faith in the Theology of Karl Rahner,” *Heythrop Journal*, 25 (1984), 301-318.

Sept 30 Revelation Week 5

Vatican I, “*Dei Filius*,” in J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1996), 40–48.

Vatican II, “*Dei Verbum*,” *Vatican Council II : the basic sixteen documents : constitutions, decrees, declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996), 97–100.

O’Collins, *RFT*, 56–95 [= ch. 4 “General and Special Revelation”].

Optional Reading:

Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church’s Reception of Revelation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 15–36 [=ch.1 “The Holy Spirit and Revelation”].

Oct 7 Jesus Christ – the fullness of revelation Week 6

O’Collins, *RFT*, 96–165 [=ch.5 “Jesus the Fullness of Revelation” and ch.6 “The Crucified and Resurrected Revealer”].

Herbert McCabe “Good Friday: The Mystery of the Cross” and “The Easter Vigil: The Mystery of New Life” in *God Matters* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 90–113.

Oct 14 Faith I – the human response to God’s revelation Week 7

Francis, *Lumen fidei*, #1–22.

Roger Haight, “Faith as a Dimension of the Human,” *Dynamics of Theology* (New York: Paulist: 1990), 15–31.

Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105–124 [=ch.4 “Religion” (selection)].

O’Collins, *RFT*, 166–189 [= ch. 7 “The Faith that Responds to Revelation”].

Optional Reading:

Dominic Doyle, “A Future, Difficult, Yet Possible Good’: Defining Christian Hope.” In *Christian Hope: Promise, Possibility and Fulfillment*, eds. Richard Lennan and Nancy Pineda-Madrid (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 16–27.

Oct 21 Faith II – faith and reason Week 8
(with special reference to neuroscience)

Dimitrios Kapogiannis, Jordan Grafman, Andrew Newberg, "Religion and the Brain: A Debate," Dana Foundation, December 2009 (online at <https://dana.org/article/religion-and-the-brain/>)

Nancey Murphy, "Reduction and Emergence. A Critical Perspective." In *Human Identity at the Intersection of Science, Technology and Religion*, edited by Christopher Knight and Nancey Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2010), 79-96.

Philip Clayton, "Neuroscience, The Person, and God: An Emergentist Account," *Zygon*, vol. 35, no. 3 (September 2000), 613-52.

Dean Blevins, "When Neuroscientists Speak: Navigating Neuroscientific Metaphysical Claims." In *Connecting Faith and Science: Philosophical and Theological Inquiries*. Edited by Matthew Nelson Hill and Wm. Curtis Holtzen (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2017), 215-40.

Oct 28 Tradition

Week 9

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #74–95

O'Collins, *RFT*, 190–215 [= ch. 8 "Tradition and the Traditions"].

Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 87–104 [=ch.6 "Tradition as a Theological Source"].

Joseph Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," in Karl Rabner and Joseph Ratzinger, *Revelation and Tradition*, trans. W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), 26–49.

Optional Reading:

Joseph Komonchak, "The Epistemology of Reception," *The Jurist* 57(1997):180–203.

Nov 4 Scripture I: Inspiration and the NT as the church's book

Week 10

Vatican II, "Dei Verbum," 100–115.

[The pdf for this reading is in week 5's readings]

O'Collins, *RFT*, 216–233 [= ch. 9 "Revelation, the Bible, and Inspiration"].

Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 27–93 [=ch. 2 "The New Testament as the Word of God" and ch. 3 "The New Testament as the Church's Book"].

Nov 11 Scripture II: Truth, canon, and interpretation

Week 11

O'Collins, *RFT*, 234–264 [= ch. 10 "The Truth, Canon, and Interpretation of the Bible"].

Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 157–179 [= ch. 6 "The World Before the Text: Meaning, Appropriation, and the Revelatory Text"].

Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," *Origins* 23/29 (January 6, 1994), 497–524.

Nov 18 Doctrine and authority

Week 12

Richard Gaillardetz, *By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003), 57–120 [= chs. 4–7 on magisterium, pope/bishops teaching authority, dogma/doctrine, sense of faithful].

Optional Reading:

George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1984), 15–45.

Nov 25 **Thanksgiving holiday – no class**

Dec 2 **Cultural context and theological styles/methods** **Week 13**

Gustavo Gutierrez, “Theology: A Critical Reflection,” in *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1973, 1988), 3–19.

O’Collins, *RFT*, 292–321 [=ch. 12 “World Religions and Christ the Revealer and Saviour”].

O’Collins, *RFT*, 322–341 [=ch. 13 “Theological Styles and Methods”].

Optional Reading:

Francis Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Boundaries* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1–23.

Karl Rahner, “On the Theology of Worship,” *Theological Investigations* 19 (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 141–49.

Dec 9 **Theology and spirituality** **Week 14**
(with special reference to neuroscience)

Kenneth I. Pargament and Annette Mahoney, “Spirituality: The Search for the Sacred” in *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (3rd edn, Oxford Handbooks Online, Feb 2017).

Micahel Ferguson, “A Neural Circuit for Spirituality and Religiosity Derived From Patients With Brain Lesions,” *Biological Psychiatry*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2021.06.016>

Michael Ferguson et al, “Reward, salience, and attentional networks are activated by religious experience in devout Mormons,” *Social Neuroscience*, 13:1, 104–116.

Sandra Schneiders, “Theology and spirituality: strangers, rivals, or partners?” *Horizons*, 13 no 2 (Fall 1986), 253–74.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES

For Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan (Kathleen.duggan@bc.edu), Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Paulette Durrett (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one's own. Penalties at Boston College range from a grade penalty to dismissal from the University. To avoid plagiarism, any use of another's words or ideas must be fully cited. If in the original wording, quotation marks or blocked, indented quotations must be used. For more information regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, please consult the STM website at <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/acadprog/acadpol.html>

The STM Writing Companions Corner (WCC) offers students one-on-one help with writing research papers, exegeses, reflection papers, and other assignments frequently given by STM faculty. Please watch *STM News* for more information on signing up for an appointment in the WCC.

Bias neutral and Inclusive Language:

Language is not fixed or static, but is constantly evolving and changing as society's attitudes and practices change. Be aware of the development of new forms of expression that endeavor to describe persons in non-discriminatory ways that are appropriate, respectful and just. In accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style and generally accepted contemporary canons of scholarship, the expectation is to use bias neutral language in academic writing. In addition to gender inclusive language, conscientious effort should be made to use appropriate language with reference to race, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, social status, etc.