

**THEO 305. Systematic Theology I. Section: 01. 3.0 Credits**

Semester: Fall 2022. Day & Time: Monday, 7:10 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

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## **Description**

Through select reading of classical and contemporary texts, this course acquaints students with the discipline of theology focusing on Prolegomena (issues on faith and reason) and Theology Proper (Doctrine of God). This course utilizes Theology Proper as a means for exploring the theme of God and Creation, that is, God's relationship to the cosmos, for study and reflection on models of moral agency in the value and care of the Earth. Special attention is given to constructions of Christian theism amid various philosophical, cosmological, social, and cultural challenges to beliefs on the being and attributes of God, the doctrine of creation, theology of nature, doctrine of incarnation, and the future of humanity in the universe.

## **Textbooks**

### Required:

Paul Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, Volume One. University of Chicago Press, 1973.

Sallie McFague. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Fortress Press, 1993.

Karen Baker-Fletcher. *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation*. Fortress Press, 1998.

Denis Edwards. *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology*. Liturgical Press, 2014.

### Recommended:

Donald K. McKim. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd Edition, Revised and Expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-0664238353. List Price: \$ 35.00.

The above books are available for purchase through the Howard University West Campus Bookstore located at 2900 Van Ness Street NW (Holy Cross Hall – Room G20).

## **Additional Readings and Learning Materials**

Additional articles and book chapters may be added as supplements to the above textbooks. For a 3-credit hour course, the total reading is approximately 1,000 pages. Please self-monitor your reading in order to stay within the expected volume of reading for this course.

## Course Goals

The purposes of this course are to:

1. Examine select topics in the Prolegomena to Theology and in Theology Proper (Doctrine of God), towards the end of comparison and contrast of various conceptions of God as well as the theological methodologies that support these conceptions.
2. Explore ways in which philosophy and science, among other disciplines, may aid and enrich theology.
3. Provide students with a foundation for further study and writing in theology.

## Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Define and utilize basic terms and concepts in Christian theology.
2. Use various sources and methods in your composition of theological essays.
3. Describe and assess various conceptions of Christian theism as forms of explanation of physical reality and the existence of evil and suffering in human life.
4. Develop a theological and moral perspective for value and care of the Earth.

## Course Requirements

For successful completion of the course, please observe the following assignments:

1. **Class attendance and participation.**  
You should be present, on-time, prepared, and fully attentive for each regularly scheduled class session. Your full cooperation in maintaining the etiquette of the classroom, virtual and physical, is expected. Attendance will be recorded at each class session which the student is expected to attend in its entirety. Absences may be taken into consideration in evaluating the student's total contribution to the work of the course. You are responsible for consulting with the professor about the best means for making up work missed due to absence. Normally, missing more than 20% of class sessions will result in failure of the course. This applies to all absences, whether "excused" or not.
2. **Critical Reflections (9 Postings in the Blackboard Discussion Forum).**  
In the Blackboard Discussion Forum, you will post, at designated times, a brief critical reflection in response to a question related to the weekly topic and/or reading. The instructor will formulate these questions which are designed to aid your integration and application of the concepts in the reading materials into your social context, faith/ministry tradition, and intellectual perspective. Via email through Blackboard, the instructor will notify you of the question and the time period for you to make your posting. You will also be required to reply thoughtfully and respectfully to the postings of your classmates.
3. **Group Assignment.**

The students will divide into 4 groups, with each group focused on one of the required textbooks, as follows: Group 1 (Tillich); Group 2 (McFague); Group 3 (Baker-Fletcher); and Group 4 (Edwards). At the concluding class session on each book, a group will share a summary statement and assessment on that particular author’s work. When the portal for the group assignment opens, each member of the group will post a minimum of 125 words in the group discussion. Afterwards, after replies (also a minimum of 125 words) in the group discussion, the group will produce a “consensus” statement and assessment of 250 words. The group’s consensus statement will be share with the whole class which, in turn, will provide peer review of the statement. **These group assignments are intended as modest exercise in ecumenical dialogue on theology and ecology.**

**4. Paper Proposal and Outline (prior to submission of the paper).**

To ensure that you receive sufficient guidance and feedback from the instructor, please submit via Blackboard to the instructor a written proposal for your paper on or before **October 3<sup>rd</sup>**. The proposal should be 1 page, typed, single-spaced, consisting of 200-300 words, describing the topic of the paper, your interest in this topic, what you foresee as your paper’s contribution towards a better understanding about this topic, and a list of sources (i.e., articles and/or books) that you will use for writing the term paper. After comments and suggestions from the Instructor, you should submit via email to the instructor a revised proposal along with an outline on **October 24<sup>th</sup>**.

**5. Term Paper.**

**Your term paper, a theological essay in methodology, will describe your approach to theological reflection, as a result of having examined the methodologies of the theologians engaging God’s being, relation to the universe, and model of moral agency for value and care of our world.** In your methodology paper, you will define key terms and concepts, common in theology and unique to your emerging “system” of theology. The paper will also identify, interrelate, and assess the sources used in your theology as well as the norm that governs your interpretation of these sources and construction of ideas. The term paper should be within the range of 12 to 15 pages, typed and double-spaced, not including your footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliography. The final draft of the term paper is due no later than **December 7<sup>th</sup>**.

**Course Assignments in Weighted Percentages**

Weekly Critical Reflections (10 postings to Discussion Forums @ 5 % each)	50%
Class Attendance and Participation (in Regular & Supplemental Sessions)	20%
Proposal (5%) and Outline (5%) of Term Paper	10%
Final draft of Term Paper (12-15 pages)	20%

**Rubrics**

See Appendix A (p. 8) for Rubric for Grading Post/Reply in Discussion Forums.  
See Appendix B (p. 9) for Rubric for Grading Term Papers.

**Grading Scale**

A = 90 – 100, B = 80 – 89, C = 70 – 79, D = 60 – 69, Below 60 = F.

For consortium students, your final grade will be converted into your theological school's plus (+) and minus (-) system, if your school uses this type of grading system.

### **Special Student Services**

Students are advised to communicate with the instructor about any unusual circumstances or physical challenges that may adversely affect their ability to meet any course requirement. *Students in need of accommodations due to disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to Howard University, or at the beginning of each semester.* The Office of Student Services is located at 1851 9th Street NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20001. The telephone number of the office is (202) 238-2420. The fax number is (202) 588-9755.

### **Writing Matters**

Writing is an essential tool for thinking and communicating in virtually every discipline and profession. Therefore, in this course I expect that you produce writing that is not only thoughtful and accurate, but also organized, clear, grammatical, and consistent with the rules of writing in theology. If your writing does not meet these standards, you may lose points or be asked to revise your written work. For assistance with your writing, you can schedule consultations with me or utilize resources at the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program and the Center for Academic Reinforcement. For further information, go to the WAC website, <http://www.cetla.howard.edu/wac/students.aspx>

### **Academic and Social Policies**

Please consult the [Howard University Student Handbook](#) (the H-book), [The Student Reference Manual](#), and the [Howard University School of Divinity Student Handbook](#) for additional information about policies on registration, attendance, withdrawal, grades, incompletes, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, harassment, [interpersonal violence](#), and other academic and social policies to which instructors, staff, and students are duty-bound. Each publication is available online from the Howard University website.

**Course Calendar:** *During the semester, check weekly for changes in the course calendar.*

### **KERYGMATIC THEOLOGY**

August 22	Tillich, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , vol. 1, Introduction, pp. 3-68.
August 29	Tillich, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , vol. 1, Reason and Revelation, pp. 71-159.
September 5	LABOR DAY – University closed
September 12	Tillich, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , vol. 1, Being, pp. 163-210.

September 19 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, God, pp. 211-289.

**Presentation from Group 1 (Tillich)**

ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

September 26 McFague, *The Body of God*, Chapters 1-2.

October 3 McFague, *The Body of God*, Chapters 3-5.

**Due today (October 3) is your term paper proposal** which should be 1 page, single-spaced, 200-300 words, describing your interest or area of focus in theology and the sources and method by which you would develop interpretations of this subject matter. The proposal should include a list of sources (i.e., articles and/or books) that you will use for writing the term paper.

October 10 McFague, *The Body of God*, Chapters 6-7.

**Presentation from Group 2 (McFague)**

RELATIONAL THEOLOGY

October 17 Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit*, Part One.

October 24 Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit*, Part Two.

**Due on today (October 24) is your revised proposal along with a rough outline of the paper.**

October 31 Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit*, Part Three.

**Presentation from Group 3 (Baker-Fletcher)**

SCIENCE-ENGAGED CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

November 7 Edwards, *Partaking of God*, Part 1 (chapters 1-3).

November 14 Edwards, *Partaking of God*, Part 2 (chapters 4-8).

November 21 Edwards, *Partaking of God*, Part 3 (chapters 9-10).

**Presentation from Group 4 (Edwards)**

November 28

Reading Day

December 5

**Final draft of the Term Paper is due today (December 5).**

Bibliography

Baker-Fletcher, Karen. *Dancing with God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective*. Chalice Press, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation*. Fortress Press, 1998.

Clayton, Philip. *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*. Eerdmans, 2000.

Cobb, John B. *Is It Too Late?: A Theology of Ecology*. Fortress Press, 2021.

Edwards, Denis. *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology*. Liturgical Press, 2014.

Froese, Paul, and Christopher Bader. *America's Four Gods: What We Say about God— and What That Says about Us*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Grey, Mary. *Introducing Feminist Images of God*. Pilgrim Press, 2001.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction*. Baker Publishing Group, 2004.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Mays, Benjamin E. *The Negro's God as Reflected in His Literature*. Chapman & Grimes, 1938; reprinted, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1970.

McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Fortress Press, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Fortress Press, 1987.

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

McGrath, Alister E., ed. *Christian Theology Reader*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Revised and

- Expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.
- Richardson, Alan, and John S. Bowden, eds. *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Westminster Press, 1983.
- Simmons, Ernest L. *The Entangled Trinity: Quantum Physics and Theology*. Fortress Press, 2014.
- Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology*. Volumes 1-3. University of Chicago Press, 1951-1957.
- Ward, Keith. *Divine Action: Examining God's Role in an Open and Emergent Universe*. Templeton Foundation Press, 2007.
- Ware, Frederick L. *African American Theology: An Introduction*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2016.
- White, Carol Wayne. *Black Lives and Sacred Humanity: Toward an African American Religious Naturalism*. Fordham University Press, 2016.
- Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006.

#### INTERNET RESOURCES

Paul Tillich Resources: Reader's Guide to Tillich's Systematic Theology  
<http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/tillich/stguide/stguide0.htm>  
<http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/tillich/stguide/stguide1.htm>  
<http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/tillich/stguide/stguide2.htm>