

THEO 7362-01- Christian Texts and Traditions III
WF, 9:30-10:50
Truett 218

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Course Description:

A study and analysis of the major texts and traditions of the church in the twentieth century with an emphasis upon the interaction of Christianity with contemporary culture and the student's ability to read contemporary culture with a view toward ministry.

Texts and Traditions 3 is the third of a three-part sequence of courses that focus upon the history of the development of Christian thought through an examination of primary readings from the Christian tradition. The focus of this course is upon modern theology in the 19th and 20th centuries. This course is part of a grant that has been funded by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Our task this semester is to focus on one central question in particular: *Who is Jesus Christ for us today?* Asking the question of the personhood of Jesus is, of course, to examine questions of Christology. The question of who Jesus leads to other, connected questions: *Who are we in light of who Jesus is?* That is, how are we to think of theological anthropology? In light of theological anthropology, a final question we must ask is, *“Where is Jesus Christ for us today?”* This is a question that addresses both ecclesiology and the doctrine of creation. To aid us in this exploration, our primary guide will be Willie Jennings’ book *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. Through Jennings’ historical genealogy of the development of the doctrines of Christology, anthropology, creation, and ecclesiology, we will come to engage some of the most significant voices of the 19th and especially 20th centuries as they faced some of the most challenging contexts in which the church’s faithfulness has been tested. The hope is that by the end of the course, students will come to recognize the centrality of these doctrinal confessions for faithful witness in our own world and ecclesial context today.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course the student should:

- A. Be familiar with major people, movements, and texts of Christian theological thought in the modern period from the Enlightenment to the present.

- B. Have an increased ability to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate historical and theological texts and arguments and read them with both sincere appreciation and critical judgment for the sake of contemporary confession within the church, recognizing their influence upon the current church's belief, life, and mission.
- C. Be equipped to discern the central questions and issues involved in theological positions and debates and relate and communicate these matters to and within a contemporary cultural and ministry context.
- D. Have a sound understanding of the issues, historical and current, addressed by the discipline of historical theology and an appreciation for the place of historical study in service to Christian faith and the life of the church.
- E. Be readied for Christian thought, life, confession, and service, both in the church and in the world.

Course Methods

This course is a seminar rather than lecture-based, which means that the bulk of our time will be spent discussing the readings. We will read short selections from primary sources, as well as secondary sources to assist with understanding and providing context. The material read, your reflection upon it, and our discussion of the readings in seminar *is* the course. So, for a successful course — do the reading, reflect upon it, come to seminar, and come ready to talk about what you have read.

Required Texts:

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3* (DBWE 3). Fortress Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8006-8303-X
2. Clifford Green, ed. *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*. Fortress Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8006-3405-5
3. Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. Yale University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-300-15211-1
4. All other readings posted on Canvas

Assignments

A. Class Participation and Attendance: All students are expected to participate in and actively contribute to class discussions. Failure to participate will negatively impact the final grade for the course. Since class sessions are central to fulfilling the objectives of the course, one percentage point will be deducted from the final cumulative course percentage grade for each absence beyond *three* unless these are due to an extended illness or other documented emergency. If you come in late or somehow get missed, it

is your responsibility to see the professor immediately after the class. Students are also expected to remain in class, during class (with some exceptions, of course). Excused absences require written notice to the professor and are discussed below. Excessive tardiness or absence (more than 12 tardies, 6 unexcused absences) will result in failure of the course regardless of assignments completed. This means that if you miss *more than* six classes, you will not pass the class. Two tardies count as 1 absence.

B. Reading: This course is a seminar, and as such, is comprised of discussions of the readings rather than formal lectures. For this reason, the selected readings are crucial. Students should be prepared to discuss the content of the readings for each day and will be expected to contribute actively and substantively to class discussions. The discussions will take up biblical, historical, theological, philosophical, and practical themes as appropriate. The texts for the class should be brought to each class session.

C. Reflection Questions: Throughout the semester, students are required to answer posted questions pertaining to the week's reading. These responses should include on one line: your name, the course title (T&T3) and section number, and the date and number of the class session (not the date you prepared the response). The response should be typed and no more than 1-1 1/2 pages (single-spaced) in length. The reports do three things: they should answer the question in light of the main points and arguments of daily readings; they should provide analysis of the readings and record personal reflections; and they should contribute response to the larger overarching questions that shape the course's primary questions. They should be submitted online before our seminar session for reference during discussion. No late reports will be accepted, though should a student anticipate that he or she will be absent, a report may be turned in early to the professor.

D. Final Response Paper: On the last day of class, students will turn in a fifteen-twenty page (double spaced, Times New Roman font) paper that answers two questions: "*Who is Jesus Christ for us today?*" and in light of that response: "*Where do we locate Christian hope today?*" The responses will draw solely from the readings and conversations we have covered together in the course this semester. The weekly reflections written over the span of the semester are intended to aid students in the writing of their final response.

E. Final Exam: Students will schedule a time for an oral examination with the professor to discuss their final paper. Together we will examine the coherence of the student's understanding of the relationship between the different doctrinal confessions explored over the course of the semester. In the oral examination, the students will be prepared to make connections between the course, their paper, and their own witness in the context of ministry today.

Grading Summary

Reflection Questions:	50%
Final Paper	25%
Final Oral Exam	25%

Grading Scale.

A	92.5-100	B	82.5-87.4	C	72.5-77.4	F	<59.5
A-	89.5-92.4	B-	79.5-82.4	C-	69.5-72.4		
B+	87.5-89.4	C+	77.5-79.4	D	59.5-69.4		

The grading scale above will be strictly observed, and final grades will not be rounded up. An 89.499 is therefore still a B+. Grades will be computed in a fair and, as far as humanly possible, accurate manner, and under no circumstances will pleas for grade changes be entertained via email. If you send me an email requesting a grade change, I will not respond to it. If, however, you have a legitimate question or gripe about your grade, or think you were given an unjust grade, please come by and talk to me in person.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism. While I strongly encourage you to discuss the course with your colleagues outside of class, I also exhort you not to share your written work with one another before the assignment is due. After you have handed in a paper, by all means feel free to share it with your friends. It is unacceptable to copy from another’s work without citing it, whether it be from your classmate or from a written source. Further, simply cutting and pasting text from an online source is considered plagiarism and will be treated very seriously. Baylor University has a very strict policy about plagiarism, and presenting someone else’s work as your own will get you kicked out of school. It is very tempting these days to cut and paste from the Internet, or to even buy a paper online. Be sure that if you are found to have submitted a paper that is not entirely your own work, you will be immediately dropped from the course with an F. But be further advised: do not be afraid of Cs. It is better to earn a C for yourself than to have someone else make an A for you.

References to the text. Citing your sources properly is both the easiest way to avoid plagiarism and the most basic step towards intellectual virtue. In an important way, citing your sources is a serious moral enterprise: through it we begin to learn that some ideas are not our own, and giving these ideas and their authors their proper credit is a question of elementary justice. We also learn that many (if not most) of the best thoughts are those which we did not come up with ourselves, but those which have been handed on to us. So in addition to justice, proper citation is also a fundamental practice in intellectual humility.

So, to that end, be sure to refer to the text you are citing in your paper. We will all be using the same texts, but do not assume that I know what you are talking about when you cite a text. You will not suffer from providing too many references, but you could from providing too few.

Title IX Office

Baylor University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities, and it does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender. If you or someone you know would like help

related to an experience involving sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, or retaliation for reporting one of these type of prohibited conduct, please contact the Title IX Office at (254)710-8454 or report online at www.baylor.edu/titleix.

The Title IX office understands the sensitive nature of these situations and can provide information about available on- and off-campus resources, such as counseling and psychological services, medical treatment, academic support, university housing, and other forms of assistance that may be available. Staff members at the office can also explain your rights and procedural options if you contact the Title IX Office. You will not be required to share your experience. If you or someone you know feels unsafe or may be in imminent danger, please call the Baylor Police Department (254-710-2222) or Waco Police Department (9-1-1) immediately. For more information on the Title IX Office, the Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence policy, reporting, and resources available, please visit the website provided above.

Students Needing Accommodation

Any student who needs academic accommodations related to a documented disability should inform me immediately at the beginning of the semester. You are required to obtain appropriate documentation and information regarding accommodations from the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA). Contact Information: (254) 710-3605 - Paul L. Foster Success Center, 1st floor on the East Wing of Sid Richardson.

Reading Schedule

W Jan 19— Introduction

F Jan 21— Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination*: Intro (pp. 1-11)

W Jan 26— Jennings: Skim 65-82; Read 82-116

F Jan 28— Friedrich Schleiermacher (Canvas) **Assignment 1 Due: Articulate in your own words the theological question(s) this course seeks to examine.**

W Feb 2— Schleiermacher (Canvas)

F Feb 4—Jennings (pp. 119-132) **Assignment 2 Due: Summarize Schleiermacher's Account of Religious Feeling.**

W Feb 9—Jennings (pp. 132-150)

F Feb 11—Jennings (pp. 150-168) **Assignment 3 Due: How does Jennings show us potential dangers of Schleiermacher's Christology?**

W Feb 16—Karl Barth: pp. 66-90

F Feb 18—Barth, Excerpts from *Church Dogmatics* (pp. 186-204)

W Feb 23—Barth (pp. 205-226)

F Feb 25— Barth (pp. 227-254) **Assignment 4 Due: Summarize Barth’s Account of God the Creator.**

W Mar 2—Jennings: Skim Chapter 4; Read 207-220

F Mar 4—Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Chapters 1, 7, 9; Stanley Hauerwas “Reinhold Niebuhr’s Natural Theology” in *With the Grain of the Universe* (Canvas).

Assignment 5 Due: What is Hauerwas’s Primary Critique of Niebuhr’s *The Nature and Destiny of Man*?

W Mar 9—Spring Break

F Mar 11—Spring Break

W Mar 16—Jennings (pp. 220-249)

F Mar 18—Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (pp. 1-17)

W Mar 23—Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (pp. 18-50)

F Mar 25—Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (pp. 51-70)

W Mar 30—Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (pp. 71-102)

F Apr 1—Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (103-146); **Assignment 6 Due: According to Bonhoeffer, how does our freedom relate to the person of Jesus Christ? How does this get to the question of “Where is Jesus Christ for us today?”**

W Apr 6—Howell Chapter

F Apr 8—Simone Weil (Canvas); **Assignment 7 Due: Following Bonhoeffer and Howell, provide an account of the geography of the Garden of Eden.**

W Apr 13—Oscar Romero (Canvas) **Assignment 8 Due: Describe Weil’s account of attention. What do you think of it?**

F Apr 15— GOOD FRIDAY: NO CLASS

W Apr 20—Oscar Romero (Canvas)

F Apr 22—Oscar Romero/Matthew Whelan (Canvas) **Assignment 9 Due: According to Whelan, what is the relationship between Romero’s Christology and his call for land reform?**

W Apr 27—Celia Deane Drummond “Performing the Beginning in the End: A Christian Anthropology for the Anthropocene” (Canvas)

F Apr 29— Willis Jenkins “The Turn to Virtue Ethics in Climate Ethics: Wickedness and Goodness in the Anthropocene”(Canvas)

W May 4— Bonhoeffer’s Sermon: “Who Do You Say that I am?” (Canvas)

F May 6—Final Paper Due (By 5:00pm)