

CTH 5520 CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Fall Semester, August 31 – December 17, 2020
Ashland (Tuesday 8:30-11:30am AND Online)
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I. Course Description

This course addresses the traditional topics of systematic theology as a narrative of salvation history. It is designed to equip students with a comprehensive and coherent theological framework for engaging in life and ministry in light of the present and future reign of God.

This course uses an online component (Blackboard) for weekly quizzes. To access Blackboard, go to <https://ashland.blackboard.com> and login. Please contact the professor **immediately** if on the first day of the semester you cannot access the Blackboard course.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes, and requirements of the traditional face-to-face semester offering of this course. For fall 2020, the sessions for this class may be offered 100% face-to-face in a physical classroom (with remote access for pre-scheduled students) 100% face-to-face virtually using technologies such as Zoom or Collaborate, as a combination of face-to-face sessions and digital activities/lectures (virtually or in-person), or as a combination of any of these elements. In the event of extended disruptions of normal classroom activities due to the pandemic, the format for this course may be modified to utilize 100% face-to-face virtual/digital classroom sessions.

As a result of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- 1-3 Not assessed
- 4a. Articulate basic theological concepts.
- 4b. Analyze theological claims in light of Scripture, tradition(s), and experience.
- 4c. Describe the foundation of their own theology.
- 4d. Reflect theologically on a particular issue of interest.
- 5-6 Not assessed

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks (in addition to the Bible):

- *Main Texts for Classroom Discussion*

- Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. New York: Harper & Row, 1959. (155 pages)

- Stiver, Dan R. *Life Together in the Way of Jesus Christ: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Waco, TX: Baylor, 2009. (628 pages)
- Olson, Roger E. *The Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality Through the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids, MI, 2017. (256 pages)
- Colijn, Brenda. *Images of Salvation in the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. (335 pages)
- Yoder, John H. *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001. (88 pages)

▪ ***Supplemental Texts for Theological Terms and Development***

- McGrath, Alister E. *Theology: The Basics, 4th ed.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2018. (296 pages)
- Grenz, Stanley, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999. (122 pages)

B. Attendance

According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit, or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

Assignments have been structured to guide you through increasingly complex thought processes as you build your theological skills. You will identify basic concepts (quizzes), analyze theological models (discussion), reflect on the foundations of your own theology (diagnostic paper), and finally draw upon appropriate sources to think theologically about a particular question or problem that interests you (final project).

Papers will be graded on clarity, coherence, depth of insight, and constructive engagement with course content. For all papers, any sources you use **must** be appropriately documented **in the text**. All such material must be quoted exactly, using quotation marks, or paraphrased completely. Any biblical references should be documented in parentheses in the text. Papers should use gender-inclusive language about people and should conform to Turabian style. **You are responsible to follow the *ATS Writing Handbook*. For due dates see the course outline.**

- **Class lectures.** The class lectures will not rehash the readings. The assigned texts are meant to be tools in your toolbox to assist with our theological discussions in class. Instead, the lectures will trace the historical development of each of the theological doctrines to better assist us in understanding the trans-generational community of the church that has shaped these beliefs of the church.
- **Class discussion.** The term “theology” derives from the Greek *theologia* (θεολογία), a combination of *theos* (Θεός, 'god') and *logia* (λογία, 'utterances, sayings, oracles')—the

latter word relating to Greek *logos* (λόγος, 'word, discourse, account, reasoning'). To do theology we must have robust discussion talk about God. Therefore, "theology" is "God-Talk." You will be evaluated on the quality (not just quantity) of your contributions to class discussion. Thoughtful questions as well as comments are encouraged, and courtesy to others is required. You will submit 2-3 substantive questions via Blackboard for the class each week to guide our time of discussion.

- **Quizzes.** You will take a quiz every other week in Blackboard on theological terms and ideas pertinent to the readings for that week. Quizzes will be objective (multiple choice, matching, multiple answer, short answer) and will consist of ten points each. They will be available for several days (up to a week) before each class and will be due at 8:00am on the day of class.
- **Diagnostic paper.** Drawing upon class materials and diagnostic exercises that will be provided, you will reflect on the foundations of your own theology. **In light of the present and future reign of God,** address the following:
 - What are the sources and norm(s) of your theology [both originally **and today**]?
 - What is the Gospel? How does the Gospel reach people? How do people receive the Gospel and its benefits?
 - What is the basic problem of the human condition? What is the resolution to that problem? How is the problem resolved?
 - What deeds are Christians called to do? What are the reasons for performing a service or action? Why (on what grounds) is one course of action the most fitting in a particular situation?

You need not do any additional research for this assignment. **Length:** 3-4 pages.

- **Final project.** In the final project, you will do a theological analysis of a particular question or problem that interests you. The purpose of the project is for you to develop **your own theology** about the topic with the assistance of biblical, historical, and theological resources. I will give you feedback on each step of the assignment. See the course schedule for when each stage is due. You will complete the project in **five stages**:
 - **Stage 1: Topic**
In a short paragraph, describe the topic you would like to work on.
Value: 10% of final project
 - **Stage 2: Proposal**
Give an overview of your topic, **using the following boldface headings**:
 - **Description.** A general description of the topic area, revised (not a thesis to defend).
 - **Rationale.** Why you want to investigate it.
 - **Research Question.** A single, open-ended question that your project will attempt to answer (not yes-or-no).

- Identification of some specific resources in each of the following categories that will help you answer the question:
 - **Biblical Resources.** Biblical passages or books about the Bible, including commentaries.
 - **Resources from Christian Tradition.** Resources from the span of church history, including your own tradition, if you identify with one.
 - **Theological Resources.** Recent works that talk about Christian beliefs.
 - **Resources from Experience.** Information from your own experience (including relevant preunderstandings) or from other disciplines that you know about.

Length: 2 pages

Value: 20% of final project

- **Stage 3: Sections 1-3 of the Theological Analysis (see below)**

Present a draft of sections 1-3 (description, biblical resources, and resources from tradition). You will revise this for the completed project.

Length: 5-7 pages

Value: 20% of final project

- **Stage 4: Sections 4-5 of the Theological Analysis (see below)**

Present a draft of sections 4-5 (theological resources, resources from experience). You will revise this for the completed project.

Length: 4-6 pages

Value: 20% of final project

- **Stage 5: Completed Theological Analysis.**

Discuss the results of your investigation **using the following seven headings**. The questions below should help to describe the contents of each section. Each section will stand more or less on its own and should make an argument in your own voice, presenting your own claims and conclusions backed up with solid supporting evidence from your research.

1. **Description of the Study.** What is your research question, and why did you want to investigate it? Why might it be a significant question to answer (and for whom)? (1/2-1 page)
2. **Biblical Resources.** What biblical passages or themes shed light on your topic? How did Bible study resources illuminate Scripture for you? What have you concluded about your research question from your study of Scripture and biblical study resources? (2-3 pages)
3. **Resources from Tradition.** What events or writings from church history (including your own tradition) illuminate your topic? Has your topic been especially important at certain times or places? Is there a consensus about your topic in church history? Has it been a matter of controversy? What have you concluded about your research question from your study of historical sources? (2-3 pages)
4. **Theological Resources.** What recent theological writings deal with your topic? Is it often or rarely discussed? What different perspectives on your topic have you

discovered? Is there any consensus? What have you concluded about your research question from your study of theological resources? (2-3 pages)

5. **Resources from Experience.** Are there any other disciplines that shed light on your topic? Do you have any personal experience that has a bearing on your topic? What have you concluded about your research question from experiential sources? (2-3 pages)
6. **Conclusions.** What do you conclude from your research and thinking? What is the answer to your research question? This is your thesis statement: the one-sentence answer to your research question. You should expand upon your thesis statement to explain it more fully. Are there still unanswered questions? Do you see any need for further research or thinking? (1-2 pages)
7. **Application.** How might your conclusions make a difference in the lives of individual Christians, the church, or the world? (1/2-1 page)

Length: 12-15 pages

Value: 30% of final project

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Percent of Final Grade</i>
Class discussion	4b	10%
Discussion questions	4a	10%
Quizzes	4a	20%
Diagnostic paper	4c	20%
Final project	4a, 4b, 4d	40%

IV. Course Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Lecture/Topics</i>	<i>Readings/Assignments</i>
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1	9/1	Introduction to Theology	Stiver, chapter 1 Colijn, Introduction Barth, Introduction Olson, Introduction <i>Supplemental: McGrath, "Development of Christian Theology"</i>
2	9/8 ONLINE	Thinking Theologically	Stiver, chapter 2 Barth, chapters 2-3 Olson, chapter 1 and interlude 1 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, "Getting Started"</i> Quiz #1 Available
3	9/15	Creation and Sovereignty	Stiver, chapter 5 Barth, chapters 8-9 Olson, chapter 6 and interlude 6 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 3 (pp. 39-48)</i>
4	9/22 ONLINE	Human Beings: God's Covenant Partners Who Turned Away	Stiver, chapter 6 Colijn, chapters 2-3 Olson, chapter 7 and interlude 7 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 3 (pp. 48-60)</i> Quiz #2 Available Proposal due
5	9/29	Jesus Christ, Bringer of the Kingdom	Stiver, chapter 7 Colijn, chapter 6 Barth, chapters 10-13 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 4</i>
6	10/6 ONLINE	Atonement: Jesus' Work for the Kingdom	Stiver, chapter 8 (p. 285-325) Colijn, chapters 3, 7 Barth, chapters 14-20 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 5</i> Quiz #3 Available Diagnostic Paper due
7	10/13	The Holy Spirit: Spirit of the Kingdom	Colijn, chapters 5, 8 Barth, chapter 21 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 6</i>

8	10/20 ONLINE	Invitation to the Kingdom: Conversion and Justification	Stiver, chapter 8 (p. 325-335) Colijn, chapter 9 Quiz #4 Available Sections 1-3 due
9	10/27	Christian Life: Already and Not Yet	Stiver, chapter 8 (p. 335-364) Colijn, chapter 10
10	11/3 ONLINE	The Church: Outpost of the Kingdom	Stiver, chapter 9 (p. 365-391) Colijn, chapter 10 Barth, chapter 22 Quiz #5 Available Sections 4-5 due
11	11/10	Practices of the Kingdom Community	Stiver, chapter 9 (p. 391-426) Colijn, chapter 12 Barth, chapter 23 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 8</i>
11	11/17 ONLINE	The Church: Alternative Witness to the World	Yoder, <i>Body Politics</i> Quiz #6 Available
—	11/24	Thanksgiving break – no class	
12	12/1 ONLINE	Personal Eschatology: Meeting the King	Stiver, chapter 10 Colijn, chapter 4 Barth, chapter 24 Quiz #7 Available
13	12/8	Corporate Eschatology: Kingdom Come	Colijn, chapter 13 <i>Supplemental: McGrath, chapter 10</i>
—	12/15	No Class	Final Project due

V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

To learn more about the topics of this course, read some of the books listed in the preliminary bibliography or in the more extended bibliography posted in Blackboard. Some of the authors in the bibliography also have videos or lectures available online. To integrate your learning with

your own theological beliefs, it's a helpful practice every five years or so to write your own credo, a statement of your beliefs in the areas covered by the course. You may find that your convictions develop or even change over time. Finally, it's always a best practice to keep returning to Scripture to refresh and test your beliefs.

VI. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary's core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one's own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one's own capabilities to achieve one's fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

B. Ashland Multiliteracy Center for Writing, Speaking and Digital Communication

The Ashland Multiliteracy Center can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified consultants can advise you online or in person. To schedule an appointment, visit Ashland Multiliteracy Center and select "Online and Graduate" from the schedule menu.

C. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations

It is Ashland University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at 419-289-5904, or send an email to dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

D. ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	

B	3.0	86-88	Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.
C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

VII. Selected Bibliography

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- Brand, Chad, ed. *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*. Nashville: B&H, 2006.
- Clouse, Robert G. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977.
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- _____. *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986.
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- _____. *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- _____. *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- _____. *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- Keener, Craig. *Gift and Giver: The Holy Spirit for Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
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