

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO
Methodist Theological School in Ohio
3081 Columbus Pike
Delaware, OH 43015
(740) 362-3120 / cos@mtso.edu

COS 512 CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY
Summer, 2010
June 22-23, 2009, and Aug. 06-07

Instructor: Dr. Paul Schrodt, Professor Emeritus
Home: (614)717-0274; cell: (614)439-5652
Email: pschrodt@mtso.edu or pschrodt@sbcglobal.net

Course Description

This course introduces and invites students to reflect critically on significant individuals, events, movements, and themes in Christian theology throughout Protestant theology in the twentieth century. These will be set against the backdrop of the social, economic, political, and intellectual trends of this period. We will also focus on the ongoing theological task of the church, specifically, on the role of the pastor in articulating his or her understanding of the gospel in the context of the church's theological doctrines and its ministry today.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of "modernity," especially as developed in 19th century liberal theology and its significance for 20th century Protestant theology.
2. To examine the liberal-conservative split in late 19th and early 20th century Protestant theology.
3. To examine the reaction of neo-orthodox Protestant theology of the mid-century and its confining significance for "postmodern," "postliberal," and "evangelical" theology today.
4. To examine the origins and significance of the liberation theologies of the 20th century, including Black, feminist, and Latin American liberation theologies.
5. To examine "postmodernity," its relation to modernity, and its significance for developments in Protestant theology today.
6. To identify one's own theological understandings in dialogue with other 20th century theologians.
7. To articulate one's own interpretation of the basic theological beliefs which undergird one's ministry in the church.

Grading

Students' final grades will be based 45% on the first set of questions, 45% on the second set of questions, and 10% on participation in class discussions and exercises. Some opportunity will be given for revising papers after the classes.

Texts

Grenz, Stanley & Roger Olson, *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992). ISBN 0-8308-1761-1
Inbody, Tyron, *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). ISBN 0-8028-4151-1

Recommended:

- 1) Ted Peters – *God: The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era, 2nd edition* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2000; ISBN 0800632656)
- 2) Joerg Rieger - *God and the Excluded: Visions and Blindspots in Contemporary Theology* (Augsburg Fortress Press, 2000; ISBN 0800632540)

Supplementary:

- 1) Terrence N. Tice – *Schleiermacher* (Abingdon Press, 2006; ISBN 9780687343348)
- 2) Robin Lovin – *Reinhold Niebuhr* (Abingdon Press, 2007 ISBN 9780687646128)
- 3) Justo L. González – *A Concise History of Christian Doctrine* (Abingdon Press, 2006; ISBN 9780687344147)
- 4) Rebecca Chopp - *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms* (Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997; ISBN 0800629965)
- 5) Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley and George E. Tinker - *A Native American Theology* (Orbis Books, 2001; ISBN 157075361X)
- 6) Justo L. González - *Manana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Abingdon Press, 1990; ISBN 9780687230679)

Instructions

1. Read the assigned books and answer the questions *completely in your own words*, using complete sentences. Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words. Follow the length given for each item of written work.
2. Type your written work on 8 1/2 white paper, one side only, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins all around. Use a font similar to what is used in these instructions (12 point Times Roman font). Do not use script, condensed, or all caps print.
3. Begin each numbered item on a new sheet of paper, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not type questions before answers.
4. If you quote from a printed text, you *must* use quotation marks and note the source

(including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long; ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information.

5. Hand in the *written work* as indicated below.

6. Make a copy of your typed material and bring it with you for your own use during the classes.

7. You will be able to supplement or correct your initial answers after our class discussions.

However, be prepared at the beginning of the class sessions to read publicly what you have been able to get from the readings.

NOTE: Using other people's materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, or some other internet source is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism, usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Professors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the professor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director in consultation with the professor will make a decision about what action is appropriate for the first instance of plagiarism. Such action could include, rewriting the material, or failure of the course. A brief summary of the meeting will be prepared by the Director and placed in the student's file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the course and the Director will determine what may apply.

Assignments

Due June 25th at the beginning of the class:

Write a two page essay on each of the following questions based on your reading of Grenz & Olson's *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age*:

1. What do we mean by "the Enlightenment" and what challenge did it pose to classical theology? (chapter one)
2. What is the role of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl in the formation of nineteenth century liberal theology, and what is your evaluation of these development in theology? (chapter two)
3. What is the role of Barth and Niebuhr in the revolt against the liberal doctrine of immanence? (chapter 3)
4. How do Tillich and process theology reformulate the liberal tradition? (chapter four)
5. How do Bonhoeffer and the secular theologians of the 1960s shape the radical theology of that decade? (chapter five)
6. How do Moltmann and Pannenberg reshape theology toward the future? (chapter six)

Write a two page essay on each of the following questions, with about 2/3 of each answer summarizing the answer to the question provided by *The Faith of the Christian Church* and about 1/3 of each answer articulating your own answer to the question:

7. What is theology? (chapter one)

8. What is the role of scripture, tradition, experience, and reason in thinking theologically? (chapter two)
9. What is the meaning of “revelation” and “faith”? (chapter three)
10. What are the biblical and classical meanings of the idea of God? (chapter four)
11. What does it mean to affirm “I believe in God . . . the creator”? (chapter five)
12. What are some understandings of God’s power in relation to suffering and evil? (chapter six)

Due August 6th at the beginning of the class (two pages each):

1. Describe the major themes of black liberation theology and give your estimation of the significance of this theology for your own theology. (chapter seven)
2. Describe the major themes of Latin American liberation theology and give your estimate of the significance of this theology for your own theology. (chapter seven)
3. Describe the major themes of feminist theology and give your estimate of the significance of this theology for your own theology. (chapter seven)
4. What is your estimation of the significance of narrative theology for twentieth century theology and your own theology? (chapter nine)
5. What recent developments have occurred in evangelical theology, and what is your estimate of that development? (chapter ten)
6. Give a brief summary of your estimate of what are the major strengths and weaknesses of developments in theology in the twentieth century.

Write a two page essay on each of the following questions, with about 2/3 of each answer summarizing the answer to the question provided by *The Faith of the Christian Church* and about 1/3 of each answer articulating your own answer to the question:

7. What is the meaning of “sin” and “original sin”? (chapter seven)
8. What is the meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian faith? (chapter eight)
9. What are some interpretations of the cross as atonement? (chapter nine)
10. What is the meaning of “justification” and “sanctification”? (chapter nine)
11. What are the mission and ministry of the church? (chapter ten)
12. What are the theological issues at stake in understanding baptism and eucharist? (chapter eleven)
13. What is it that Christians may hope for? (chapter twelve)

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or

ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- (1) warning
- (2) probation
- (3) suspension for the remainder of the course
- (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio
- (5) failing grade for the course.

Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's district superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry.

Cokesbury Bookstore

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COS 512

Contemporary Theology

Dr. Paul Schrodtt

Summer 2010

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Required Books

20th Century Theology Grenz/Olson 26.00 20% 20.80

The Faith of the Christian Church Inbody 26.00 20% 20.80

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