

# TH 6ST6

## Systematic Theology

McMaster Divinity College  
Fall 2022  
In-Person/Livestream  
Mondays 11:00am–12:50pm

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1:50pm, also available via Zoom and by  
appointment

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### I. Description:

How do our beliefs about God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ impact our Christian life and ministry? How do we relate our Christian faith to the changing world of today? This course addresses these questions through an exploration of the rich content of Christian theology and its application to contemporary issues of Christian life and ministry. Intersecting biblical faith with the multiple dimensions of our lives is vital for a flourishing relationship with God. I invite you to join me on an investigation of the ways that our views of the task of theology, revelation and Scripture, the Trinity, Christ, theologies of creation and human beings as divine image bearers, the church, and eschatology can open up new horizons of Christian formation and ministry.

### II. Course Objectives:

#### A. Knowing:

1. The process of theological development.
2. A range of Christian perspectives on the major categories of systematic theology.
3. Key Christian thinkers and theological traditions.

#### B. Being:

1. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ.
2. Embrace a deeper sense of your Christian identity vis-à-vis the diverse trajectories of Christian theology.
3. Reflect on how alternative theologies and spiritualities can positively contribute to your process of spiritual formation.

#### C. Doing:

1. Develop skills in the art of theological reflection and expression, especially in light of your dissertation topic.

2. Identify and describe the dynamic and personal nature of theology.
3. Engage in the process of constructive theological reflection by describing the way(s) the class (readings, lectures, etc.) has shaped your understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

### III. Required Text:

- Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

\* Note: If you have already read this book, you can select an alternative.

### IV. Course Performance Criteria:

Assignment	Percent	Due Date
A. Lecture and Syllabus	50%	
a. Presentation in-class	10%	Nov 7
b. Annotated bibliography	15%	Nov 11
c. Seminar or blog series	25%	Nov 11
B. Paper, Presentation, & Interaction	50%	
a. Presentation in-class	10%	Nov 28
b. Post Padlet Interaction	10%	Nov 29
c. Submit final paper	30%	Dec 5
Total: 100%		

### V. Course Outline (*tentative*):

Week	Lecture Topics and Class Activities	Due Dates and Reminders
1 Sept 12	Introduction to the Course  <b>I. The Nature and Task of Theology</b>	
2 Sept 19	Nature and Task of Theology continued  • Small group discussion of Christian Formation topic	• McGrath, chs 5–6
3 Sept 26	<b>II. Revelation and Scripture</b>	• McGrath, chs 7–8
4 Oct 3	<b>III. The Triune God</b>  • Small group discussion of major paper/project	• McGrath, chs 9–10

	• Small group reading and discussion of John Donne’s sonnet “Batter My Heart, Three Person’d God	
5 Oct 10	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	
6 Oct 17	Triune God continued  • Small group discussion of providence and free will	
7 Oct 24	<b>Reading Week and Hybrid Intensive Week</b>  <i>No class</i>	
8 Oct 31	<b>IV. Christology</b>	• McGrath, chs 11–12
9 Nov 7	Christology continued  • DPT seminar/blog series presentation  • MA/PhD lecture presentation	• MA/PhD Lecture and syllabus due Nov 11
10 Nov 14	<b>V. Theology of Creation</b>	
11 Nov 21	<b>VI. Redemption</b>	• McGrath, chs 13–14
12 Nov 28	<b>VII. Ecclesiology</b>  • MDiv/MTS Mini-presentation of paper/project  • DPT Paper presentations  • PhD paper presentations	• McGrath, chs 15–16  • MA/PhD Padlet interaction due Nov 29
13 Dec 5	<b>VIII. Eschatology</b>	• McGrath, ch 18  • MA/PhD papers due Dec 5

## VI. Assignment Descriptions

### General Guidelines:

- Submit your assignments in the relevant folder on Avenue to Learn. I prefer Word docs rather than PDFs. PDF files may not receive electronic comments—I find them clunky and difficult to deal with.

- Use the following format for file names: your last name.assignment name.docx [Studebaker.AssignmentName.docx]. PDF files may not receive electronic comments—I find them clunky and difficult to deal with.
- Papers and assignments may be submitted early for feedback from the professor and resubmitted on the due date for grading.
- All papers and assignments should conform to MDC’s Style Guide.

A. Lecture, Syllabus, and Annotated Bibliography:

1. Purpose:

This assignment provides experience *preparing* a syllabus and *delivering* a lecture for teaching in an undergraduate setting. The preparation of the syllabus also helps fulfill one of the requirements of the Mastery Checklist.

2. Description:

You will prepare a syllabus on a topic related to Christian theology (determined in consultation with the professor). You may use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program (e.g., prepare for doctoral comprehensive exams and MA thesis/PhD dissertation topics). You should, however, gear the syllabus and the lecture toward an undergraduate audience.

3. Guidelines:

a. Research:

- 1) Research for the lecture will account for the supplemental reading for research degree students (approximately 5,000-6,000 pages)
- 2) Documentation of reading:  
Please provide an annotated bibliography of the reading consulted in the preparation of the lecture (the annotations for the texts should be about one paragraph—identify the key thesis and contributions of the text).

b. Lecture:

- 1) The lecture should present and discuss the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic)
- 2) Lecture handouts/outlines and PowerPoint/Prezi are helpful, but not required.
- 3) Length:  
The lecture and discussion will take approximately a fifty-minute period of the course (depending on the size of class, we may abbreviate the

presentation length to thirty minutes). You will present the lecture during one of the campus class days.

Note: If COVID-19 requires the conversion of this class to all online delivery, you will post a video presentation of your lecture and will have the opportunity to provide feedback to your class colleagues in an online venue.

- c. Syllabus:  
Be sure to craft the syllabus for an undergraduate class.

The syllabus should contain the essential features of a class syllabus:

- Course title
- Course description
- Course objectives
- Texts (required and supplemental)
- Assignments
- Course outline (weekly lecture topics)

4. Evaluation:  
Grading of the lecture and discussion session will be based on the following . . .

- a. Please submit (in Avenue folder) . . .
- Copy of notes used for the lecture presentation
  - Copy of the syllabus
  - Annotated bibliography used to develop the lecture.
- b. Does the lecture accurately present and discuss the topic?
- c. Does the lecture engage in critical evaluation/discussion of the content?
- d. Does the lecture highlight the transcendent value of the material—e.g., does it have value for contemporary Christian thought, life, and ministry?
- e. Does the lecture facilitate student discussion?

B. Major Paper:

1. Description:  
Research degree students will write an academic thesis paper or prepare a cultural engagement project. If you have an idea for a paper or creative project, please come and discuss your idea with me. I am open to papers/projects that cohere with the essence of the course and are suited to your research field and interests.

2. Purpose:  
This assignment gives you experience writing article, essay, and chapter length theological papers and presenting research in an oral form similar to that performed at academic conferences.
3. Guidelines for the Paper:  
The paper should include (description categories below correspond to those of the grading rubric) . . .
  - a. Content and argument:
    - 1) Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).
      - Example of a thesis statement: the Emergent church movement is an authentic Christian way of being the church in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.
    - 2) Describe your topic.
    - 3) Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
    - 4) Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view.
  - b. Style and format:
    - 1) Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., you should avoid excessive first-person discourse, colloquialisms (academic is different than conversational voice), passive voice (use active).
    - 2) Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources.
    - 3) Accurately document sources according to the College's Style Guide.
    - 4) Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 7,000 words (including footnotes).
    - 5) Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).
    - 6) Use footnotes.

C. Paper Presentation:

Note: Depending on the number of doctoral and MA students in the class, we may have a dedicated doctoral and MA presentation session.

1. Time: 15–20 minutes
2. Presentation content:  
You should articulate the paper’s thesis, topic, and argument. You can use PowerPoint, etc. if you wish. The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience presenting papers as you might at an academic conference. You should prepare and present your paper for that type of venue. I encourage you to consider presenting your paper for this class at a conference and/or the Theological Research Seminar of the Divinity College.

A written submission/outline is not required, but it is encouraged as it may be beneficial to other students in the course

D. Guidelines for the Paper Interactions (post on Padlet)

1. Purpose:  
Provides experience in responding to academic presentations and discussions, such as one might do at an academic society meeting.
2. Description:  
Each student *prepares a critique* and *facilitates a discussion* of a thesis paper presentation.
  - a. The critique:
    - 1) Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.
    - 2) Critical (includes highlighting and discussing problems *and* strengths):  
  
The critique should explore the following sorts of issues:
      - Does the paper have a thesis?
      - Does the content develop and support the thesis?
      - Does it use appropriate sources?
      - Does it interact with the relevant secondary literature?
3. Post your critical evaluation with 24 hours of the presentations for each student in the paper/project Padlet.
  - Interactions can text, audio, video.
  - Length: the equivalent of a substantive paragraph of written interaction.

**VII. Policies:**

- A. Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

C. Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

D. Style:

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses ([link](#)). Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

E. Disclaimer:

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

### VIII. Late-Assignment and Exam Policy:

- A. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus.
- B. Students take exams on the date and at the time scheduled in the syllabus.
- C. Late assignments are reduced five percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late, the grade will be reduced to 85).
- D. Assignments and exams will be accepted without penalty after the specified date in the syllabus **only** in the case of an excused absence. If a student misses an exam or assignment submission due to a reason that he/she believes is excusable, then he/she must notify the instructor and

schedule an exam date and/or late-assignment submission date within twenty-four hours of the beginning of the missed class session.

- E. Assignments and exams will not be accepted late on the basis of the student's involvement with school-approved activities. If you are not able to be in class for an exam or assignment submission, then you must pre-arrange with the instructor to take the exam and/or submit the assignment before the scheduled date in the syllabus.

## IX. Bibliography

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiæ*. Numerous translations and still substantial abridgements are available, (Roman Catholic).

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975, (Reformed and Neo-orthodox).

Bicknell, E. S. *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles*. New York: Longmans, 1919, (Anglican).

Bloesch, Donald G. *Christian Foundations*. This is a multiple volume set that began in 1992 with *A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, (Barthian Congregationalist).

Burtner, Robert W. and Robert E. Chiles, editors. *John Wesley's Theology: A Collection From His Works*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983, (Wesleyan).

Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volumes I & II*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979, (Traditional Reformed).

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Image, 1995, (Roman Catholic).

Chan, Simon. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998, (Asian, with emphasis on the practice of personal transformation).

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. 1993.

Evan, James H. *We have been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology*. 1992.

Finger, Thomas N. *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: biblical, historical, constructive*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004 (Anabaptist/Moravian).

Gonzalez, Justo L. *Mañana: Christian Theology from Hispanic Perspective*. 1990. (Post-Vatican II Catholic).

Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994, (Canadian Baptist, progressive evangelical).

- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. (Conservative and Charismatic evangelical)
- Lee, Jung Young. *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. 1995.
- Macchia, Frank D. *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005 (Contemporary Pentecostal).
- Maddox, Randy. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994, (Wesleyan).
- McBrien, Richard, *Catholicism* (1980), BX 1751.2 .M24
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994, (Reformed Anglican).
- Oden, Thomas C. *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, (Wesleyan).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Systematic Theology: Volume 1 The Living God, Volume 2 The Word of Life, Volume 3 Life in the Spirit*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988, (Wesleyan, with particular interest in the early church fathers who founded the Eastern Orthodox traditions).
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, (Lutheran).
- Peters, Ted. *God-The World's Future: Systematic Theology for the Post Modern Era*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, (Lutheran, confessional, postmodern).
- Polkinghorne, John. *The Faith of a Physicist: Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker, The Gifford Lectures 1993-94*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, (Scientist and Anglican).
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. 1993.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986, (Dispensationalist).
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963, (Classical Liberalism).
- Yong, Amos. *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: The Possibility of a Global Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, (Contemporary Pentecostal).
- Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: God, the World, and Redemption: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academic Books, 1988, (Reformed and Charismatic).
- Williams, Rowan. *On Christian Theology*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, (Contemporary Anglican).