

TH 5ST5

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

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 practice-led research 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. Seminar or Blog Series	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 I. The Nature and Task of Theology	
2 Sept 19	Nature and Task of Theology continued • Small group discussion of Christian Formation topic	• McGrath, chs 5–6
3 Sept 26	II. Revelation and Scripture	• McGrath, chs 7–8
4 Oct 3	III. The Triune God • 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	Reading Week and Hybrid Intensive Week <i>No class</i>	
8 Oct 31	IV. Christology	• McGrath, chs 11–12
9 Nov 7	Christology continued • DPT seminar/blog series presentation	• DPT seminar/blog series due Nov 11
10 Nov 14	V. Theology of Creation	
11 Nov 21	VI. Redemption	• McGrath, chs 13–14
12 Nov 28	VII. Ecclesiology • MDiv/MTS Mini-presentation of paper/project • DPT Paper presentations • PhD paper presentations	• McGrath, chs 15–16 • DPT Padlet interaction due Nov 29
13 Dec 5	VIII. Eschatology	• McGrath, ch 18 • DPT 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. Annotated bibliography and Seminar OR Blog series

- ◆ This assignment has two parts
 - Annotated bibliography
 - Seminar OR blog series
- ◆ The purpose of this assignment is to develop skills in . . .
 - Researching and reviewing academic resources
 - Creatively applying that research to your PLR topic or other areas of ministry

1. Annotated bibliography

Develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources related to *the topic of the course* and your research project. For each text, write a 100–150 word annotation that describes the content of the source and the way it relates to the seminar or blog series. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list.

2. Seminar OR blog series

* Note: If you have an alternative idea to a seminar or blog series, such as a sermon, please consult with me. The goal is for you to complete an assignment that is beneficial to your research and vocational context.

a. Description:

This assignment provides experience *preparing a seminar OR 4 part blog series* based on the research resources of the annotated bibliography.

The seminar/blog series should be geared to address either a church lay leadership or professional ministry leadership group. The content and its development should reflect the target audience. You can also use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program. Consequently, the seminar/blog series can address the practice led topic that is the focus of your DPT studies. Thus, this assignment can provide the opportunity to investigate an area of theology and to apply it to your area of practice led research.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Seminar
 - The seminar material should present and describe the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic). It does not need to be a verbatim text, but a detailed and annotated outline of the seminar content (approximately 2,000 words).
 - Handouts/outlines and PowerPoint/Prezi are helpful, but not required.
 - Length: Develop the seminar content for a thirty- to forty-minute presentation.
- 2) Blog series
 - Write a 4 part blog series. The blog content should derive from the research resources reviewed in the annotated bibliography.
 - Length of each blog is 450–500 words.

3. Guidelines for the Class presentation

- a. Present a summary of your seminar or blog series during a class session.
- b. The presentation should summarize . . .
 - Target audience,
 - Topic,
 - Why you chose it, and . . .
 - Outline the topic's development in the seminar. You do not need to present the entire seminar. The video presentation is an overview of the seminar.
- c. Length of presentation is approx. 10 minutes.

B. Major paper, presentation, and interaction

- ◆ This assignment gives you experience writing and presenting article, essay, and chapter length papers. It also affords the opportunity to contribute to and receive feedback from your course colleagues.
- ◆ You are encouraged to use this assignment as an opportunity to work on papers to . . .

- Present at academic and/or professional society meetings and/or submit to journals for publication
- Develop material for presentation to and/or application in your professional world
- Pursue dissertation research.

1. Paper

You will *write* and *present* a thesis paper on a topic related to course content and your area of DPT practice led research. I encourage you to investigate the issue from the perspective of your discipline and area(s) of research interest.

a. Guidelines for the Paper:

The paper should include (description categories below correspond to those of the grading rubric) . . .

1) Content and argument

a) Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).

- Example of a thesis statement: The missional church movement, especially its emphasis on incarnational ministry, provides valuable insight for Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.

Note: The DPT PLR topic in this thesis statement is “Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.”

b) Describe your topic.

c) Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.

d) Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view, where and when appropriate.

2) Form and Style:

a) Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., avoid excessive first-person discourse, colloquialisms (academic differs from conversational voice), and passive voice (use active).

b) Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources. Given the limitations on accessing libraries, you may need to rely more on journal articles than other normal circumstances.

c) Accurately document sources according to the [MDC Style Guide](#).

d) Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 8,000 words.

- e) Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).
- f) Use footnotes.

2. Guidelines for Presentation

- a. During a class session session, share the following on your paper or project:
 - Topic
 - Why you chose your topic
 - Content areas and development
 - Key resources
- b. Time: 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Padlet Feedback

- a. Purpose:
Provides experience in responding to and contributing to your class colleagues' projects. It provides the opportunity to develop professional skills in academic interaction that takes places at professional and academic conferences.
- b. Description:
Each student prepares a critical evaluation of the papers presented by their class colleagues.
 - 1) The critique:
 - a) Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.
 - b) 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?
 - Does it bring the PLR topic into conversation with an area of theology?
 - 2) Post your critical evaluation for each DPT student in the Paper Padlet—see A2L outline, Paper Padlet. Evaluations can be written, audio, or audio-visual.

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. 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).