

# Theology

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Theology is sustained through critical reflection on the sources, norms, and contents of Christian belief. This task belongs to both the individual and the community and seeks a faithful and effective expression of the Gospel for our time and place. Core courses and electives develop a student's skill in theological reflection as integral to the church's ministry and mission.

## Courses

### **THEO 503 Foundations of Christian Spirituality (3)**

This class explores the theological foundations and practice of Christian spirituality that lie at the heart of all Christian ministry, whether lay or ordained. We begin with what shapes Christian identity most fundamentally: the grace and covenant of Holy Baptism. Since baptism unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection, we will observe throughout the course how the pattern of the Paschal mystery is stamped on every aspect of Christian experience. For instance, we examine what it means to worship and to live eucharistically. We ponder the ways in which the seasons of the church year invite us to fuller participation in Christ. We look at what it means to live in the bonds of charity in community, whether in seminary or in the parish. We discuss some of the disciplines of Christian discipleship such as a rule of life. We learn how to prepare for and use the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And finally, we explore methods of prayer and meditation, developed over centuries in the Christian tradition, as th.

### **THEO 511 Systematic Theology I (3)**

The basic course in Christian doctrine studies the process of doctrinal and dogmatic formulation. It examines the role played by Scripture, the ecumenical councils, and other sources in the history of Christian thought, as well as contemporary theological discussion. The doctrines of God, Creation, Christology, and Soteriology are the principal theological topics covered.

### **THEO 521 Systematic Theology II (3)**

Ecclesiology is theological reflection on the nature, mission, and life of the church. It is therefore both a foundational and a practical discipline, which can generate the entire range of issues for constructive theology. The first half of the course examines the sacramental and communal ground and nature of the church, including both historical and contemporary sacramental theology. The second half of the course focuses on the life and mission of the church. It examines a variety of contemporary issues, which challenge the church's sense of both its identity and mission in the world today. These issues include conversion, globalization (including world mission), ecumenism, and liberation.

### **THEO 531 Theology of the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Life (3)**

Theology of the spiritual life is being excitingly re-grounded in a revived interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology), itself part of a revival of Trinitarian theology. This course allows students to explore these interesting developments through consideration of important texts and sharing personal and pastoral experience.

### **THEO 533 Readings in Contemporary Anglican Theology (3)**

Readings, lectures, and discussions will focus on the neo-evangelical theology taking root at Oxford, American feminist and liberation theology, African and Asian indigenous theologies, and postmodern radical orthodoxy centered at Cambridge.

### **THEO 540 Modern Spiritual Writers (3)**

In this course we read theologians of the past one hundred years whose writings can enlarge our vision of God, disclose the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection, and deepen our life in the Spirit. We encounter authors such as Evelyn Underhill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Merton, Kenneth Leech, Miriam Pollard, and Rowan Williams. Only primary texts are used, and both reading and written assignments are designed to foster meditative reflection and prayerful appropriation of the spiritual wisdom of these writers. Through close reading, students should grow in their ability to exegete texts. They should also find encouragement and practical help for their spiritual practice as well as a wealth of insight that can sustain prayer, preaching, and pastoral care.

### **THEO 541 History of Christian Spirituality I (3)**

This course is a reading seminar considering classic texts from Athanasius's *Life of Anthony* through Luther's *Theologia Germanica*.

### **THEO 542 History of Christian Spirituality II (3)**

This course is a reading seminar considering classic texts (one per week) from Teresa of Avila to Martin Luther King Jr. and Simone Weil.

### **THEO 552 God and Nature (3)**

The objective of this course is to examine ways in which Christians have understood God in relation to the created order. We will focus specifically on the last five hundred years: how our conception of nature has shifted and, with it, our ways of conceiving of God. We will juxtapose this with modern cosmological "stories" and the challenges they present theologically. A field component will be an aspect of this course: students should be prepared to explore the Domain both in and out of class time.

**THEO 553** *The Glass of Vision: Scripture, Metaphysics, and Poetry* (3)

This course will examine one of the most significant texts of 20th century Anglican theology: Austin Farrer's Bampton Lectures delivered in Oxford in 1948 and published as *The Glass of Vision*. According to Farrer, the general topic of the lectures is "the form of divine truth in the human mind," explored through engagements with three areas of inquiry: scripture, metaphysics, and poetry. Specific issues considered are the relationship between faith and reason, the nature of biblical inspiration and divine revelation, the character of human imagination, and the literary analysis of New Testament texts. We will also consider Farrer's critics and defenders, such as Helen Gardner, Frank Kermode, David Jasper, and David Brown. This course also has the attribute of ANGL.

**THEO 554** **The Creeds** (3)

This seminar course will examine the basic doctrines of the Christian faith through careful readings of two texts on the creed(s): Berard Marthaler's *The Creed* and Rowan Williams' *Tokens of Trust*. The objective of the course is for students to understand and personally appropriate the core doctrines of the church, in terms of their historical roots, their doctrinal significance, and their systematic coherence.

**THEO 555** **Word, Spirit, and Incarnation** (3)

This seminar course will examine the interplay of the Word and Spirit in the Christological mysteries from Annunciation to Second Coming. Authors to be considered will include Eugene Rogers, Elizabeth Johnson, Alasdair Heron, Kilian McDonnell, Kathryn Tanner, and John V. Taylor, and Eastern theologians such as Dumitru Staniloae and John Zizioulas. Grade will be based on class participation and a 20-page paper.

**THEO 556** **Reading Redemption: Anselm, Aquinas, and Ruether** (3)

In this course we will dig deeply into traditional and contemporary ways of understanding redemption. We will begin with a thorough reading of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* and the notion of "satisfaction." We will then explore how Aquinas conveys the work of Christ in returning us to union with God. Finally, we will use Ruether's *Women and Redemption* to investigate modern feminist approaches to redemption in order to construct contemporary perspectives.

**THEO 557** **Classics of Medieval Spiritual Writers** (3)

Most classics texts of Christian Spirituality are actually works of spiritual guidance. Rooted in a profound experience of God, they move from prayer to pastoral art, seeking to guide others in the ways of grace through the written word. Over the centuries, Christians in a variety of circumstances have continued to draw wisdom and insight from these spiritual mentors of the past. Through a close reading of mostly primary sources (Benedict, Bernard of Clairvaux, Aelred of Rievaulx, Francis of Assisi, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and Julian of Norwich), we will sample some of the diverse schools of Western Christian spirituality from the sixth through the fourteenth centuries. The course will introduce and develop perennial categories and tensions in spiritual theology such as the affirmative and negative ways, contemplation and service, liberty and discipline. While reading these authors critically and in their own historical context, we will nonetheless be asking how their teaching might.

**THEO 558** **'Jesus Died for our Sins': Problems with Atonement** (3)

This course will begin with some recent criticisms, from feminists and pacifists, of Christian theologies of atonement as necessarily violent. It will then examine theological resources of the tradition in light of these concerns. These resources will include the New Testament (with a focus on Paul), Anselm's theory of satisfaction, and Aquinas' more systematic integration of previous views. The course will then return to modern alternatives that address the issue of violence in God's solution to the problem of sin. *Prerequisite or Corequisite: THEO 511.*

**THEO 559** **Readings in Contemporary Eco-Theology** (3)

Seminar on contemporary writings in theology concerned with environmental issues. The major focus for 2015 is on David Clough, *On Animals*, and the impact on Christian Systematic Theology from taking seriously ethical claims concerning the humane treatment of animals.

**THEO 560** **Creation, Evolution, and God** (3)

Since Charles Darwin visited the Galapagos Islands over 175 years ago there has been much debate over whether the theory of evolution necessarily eliminates a belief in God. Even in theological circles ideas about God and how God creates and maintains the universe have been severely revised. This course will examine the Judeo-Christian understanding of creation, modern views of evolution, and current debates about God and creation, review developments of creation theology through the centuries and then move on to learn about the science of evolution. Theological sources will include the classical theism of Thomas Aquinas and the notion of emergent probability developed by Bernard Lonergan in our contemporary era.

**THEO 561** **Readings in Teilhard de Chardin** (3)

This course will consist of reading the major works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J (1881-1955). De Chardin was a Roman Catholic priest in the Society of Jesus. As well as being a priest, De Chardin was trained as a geologist and did extensive fieldwork in China over a 23 year period. He wrote extensively on theology and evolution. In this course both his scientific and his theological works will be addressed.

**THEO 562** **Writings of the Spiritual Quest** (3)

Study of a broad range of imaginative writings, from ancient to modern, concerned with the human search for God, transcendence, and ultimate meaning. Literatures influenced by Jewish and Christian traditions figure prominently in the reading list but works inspired by Buddhism and Native American religion are included as well. Texts include writing by at least one medieval mystic and by authors such as George Herbert, Leo Tolstoy, Black Elk, Elie Wiesel, Flannery O'Connor, T.S. Eliot, and Marilynne Robinson.

**THEO 594 Directed Readings (1 to 4)**

A systematic theology topic developed by the student and a School of Theology faculty member to meet an educational goal not met through existing courses.

**THEO 595 Master of Sacred Theology Thesis (3 or 6)**

S.T.M. students register for THEO 595 while writing their thesis.

**THEO 598 Research Project (3)**

M.A. students in the Bible, Church History, Theology, and Religion and Environment concentrations register for THEO 598 while pursuing their research project.

**THEO 599 Thesis (3 or 6)**

M.A. students in the Theology and Literature concentration register for THEO 599 while writing their thesis.

**THEO 625 Opening the Book of Nature (3)**

Ancient Christian tradition maintained that God authored two books through which God continues to speak to us: the book of Scripture and the book of Nature. The “book of Nature” has been the subject of intense recent interest due to our growing awareness of human dependence on fragile ecosystems and the environmental crises of the past century. This course will begin with an experiential exploration of the spiritual character of Sewanee’s natural setting, move to consider the biblical and theological witness to Creation and human responsibility for it, and conclude with the socio-economic implications for the way we live and work in the 21st century.

**THEO 699 Doctor of Ministry Project (3 or 6)**

D.Min. candidates register for THEO 699 while pursuing their research project.