

Theology through the Creed

RELG 333 Principles of Theology 1: W2020 TR 4:05-5:25

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Description

An introduction to the central questions, claims, and categories of Christian thought, considered in their narrative and credal context, with discussion of the nature of theology and the relation between faith and reason.

Goals

- to examine the Nicene Creed, and selected primary and secondary literature, with a view to increasing both historical and theological literacy
- to begin learning how to think theologically, and how to distinguish between true and false theological claims

Requirements

- Regular attendance and preparation in the assigned readings. Students will be quizzed in class about these brief excerpts. **20%**
- A close reading of Robert Wilken's *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (c. 300 pp.; available at Paragraph Books). There will be a brief in-class examination on **25 February** to test your familiarity with this book. **10%**
- A paper engaging Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (available in print or at https://dkbl.alexanderstreet.com/cgi-in/DKBL/hub.py?type=volume_details&display=church). You may choose one section, according to interest, from §§ 28–31, 57–61, 64–66. Begin browsing in January and indicate your choice no later than **15 February**. **30%**

This paper of 3400–3800 words, due at the beginning of class on **17 March**, must:

- show a solid grasp of Barth by way of careful and contextually sensitive exposition of at least 75 pp. of the *Dogmatics* [18]
- successfully employ two or more high-quality secondary sources to assist you in understanding and evaluating what you have read [8]
- be properly cited and carefully edited [4]

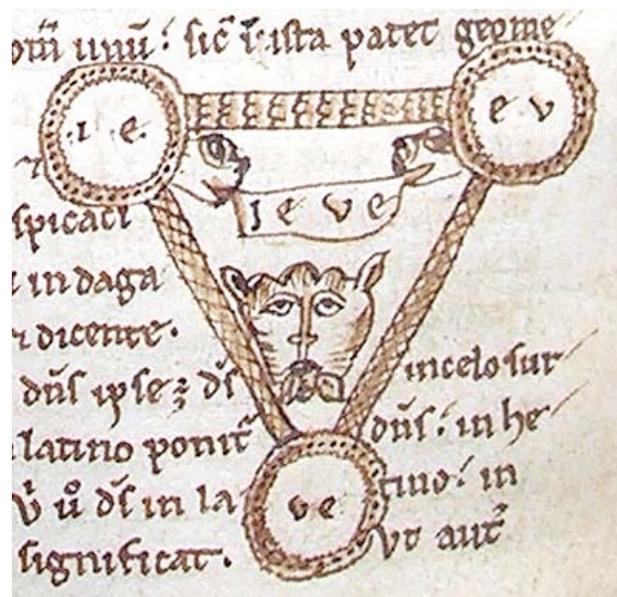
NB: Late papers, penalized by 1 mark, must be turned in on 19 March.

- Final examination. 40%

The final exam may include both short-answer and essay questions.

Additional information

- Lectures and PowerPoint will be accompanied by classroom discussion and questions based on the primary readings, which are short excerpts accessed via MyCourses.
- Notes will be taken by hand. No computers or electronic devices may be used in the classroom except in cases of disability.
- Consultation is available after class or T/R by appointment in Birks 208.
- PFNP and related matters: Surnames are used by the instructor. No one is required to adopt views, claims, or linguistic forms with which they disagree, though all are bound by the obligations of the syllabus and by traditional standards of civility.
- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. For more information, see 'Keeping it Honest': www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/
- In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.



Petrus Alphonsi (c. 1109)

Lecture and Reading Outline

January (First Article)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| 7 What is Theology? | R1 John Paul II, <i>Faith and Reason</i> |
| 9 What if Plato is wrong? | R2 Justin, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> |
| 14 Who or what is God? | R3 Irenaeus, <i>Demonstration</i> |
| 16 <i>Lex Orandi</i> | R4 Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i> |
| 21 Gnosticism and its Antidote | R5 Tolkien, <i>Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth</i> |
| 23 Of Elves, Angels, and Men | R6 Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> |
| 28 Nature and Grace | R7 Basil, <i>Hexaemeron</i> |
| 30 Why Aristotle wasn't enough | |

February (Second Article)

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|---|---|
| 4 Trinitarian Theology | R8 Athanasius, <i>On the Incarnation</i> |
| 6 What difference does an <i>iota</i> make? | R9 Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> |
| 11 Mother of God! | R10 Leo, <i>Letter to Flavian</i> |
| 13 Why did Jesus die? | R11 Luke, <i>Gospel and Acts</i> |
| 18 The Problem of Atonement | R12 Anselm, <i>Why God Became Man</i> |
| 20 Resurrection: Justice and Power | R13 Augustine, <i>On the Trinity</i> |
| 25 Ascension: War in Heaven | R14 John, <i>Apocalypse</i> [Wilken Quiz] |
| 27 Parousia: <i>Ecce Homo!</i> | R15 Cyril, <i>Catechetical Lectures</i> |

Reading Week [paper due 17 March]

March (Second & Third Articles)

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 10 The Quick, the Dead, & the Damned | R16 <i>Gospel of Matthew / Catechism</i> |
| 12 The Lord and Giver of Life | R17 Paul / Basil / Gregory, <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> |
| 17 The Peoples of the Covenant | R18 Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> |
| 19 The Marks of the Church | R19 Vatican II, <i>Lumen Gentium</i> |
| 24 Moral Theology | R20 Augustine, <i>Morals</i> |
| 26 Political Theology | R21 Farrow, <i>Ascension Theology</i> |
| 31 Sacramental Theology | R22 Trent, Session 13 / Calvin, <i>Institute IV</i> |

April (Third Article)

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|--------------------|--|
| 2 Grace upon Grace | R23 Augustine, <i>Trinity</i> / Paul, <i>1 Corinthians</i> |
| 7 The End of Man | R24 John / Irenaeus / Augustine, <i>City of God</i> |
| 9 Truth and Error | R25 Irenaeus |

Questions for Study and Reflection

NB: On the exam you should draw on the lectures and supplemental notes, and your assigned readings and texts, for help in formulating your answers. It is a good idea to make notes on which of the readings might be especially useful in addressing particular questions. Add your own questions, based on the readings, and try to answer them. Keep a list of maxims that might qualify as principles of theology.

What were the essential points in the primitive Christian gospel? Why was this message a 'scandal' to Jews and 'foolishness' to Greeks?

Is there a link between Christian belief in the Trinity and the Christian claim that reason and knowledge are not independent of faith?

What follows from the claim that the one God is maker of everything, and that God makes everything *ex nihilo*? Are there implications for secular pursuits in science, politics, law, etc.?

What does Christianity have to say about the *imago dei* (image of God) in human beings?

In the controversies that preceded the first ecumenical council, who were some of the influential thinkers and how did they differ in their understanding of God and the God-world relation?

Why was the inclusion in the creed of '*homoousion*' so controversial? What was at stake?

Why is Mary called *Theotokos*? What are the main teachings about Mary in classical Christianity and in the Catholic tradition?

What is the Chalcedonian doctrine of the incarnation, and how is it related to the Christian understanding of salvation?

What factors are thought to have contributed to Jesus being sentenced to death?

In what sense or senses was Jesus' death an offering or atonement?

How might we interpret the claim, in its original context, that Jesus is 'Son of God'?

How does the larger narrative of scripture help to interpret the resurrection and ascension of Jesus?

How does the doctrine of the parousia bear on the Christian view of history?

What does the creed have to say about the Holy Spirit, and what arguments were used in support of the full deity of the Spirit?

Why was the dispute about the *filioque* deemed important?

How does the doctrine of the Trinity support Christian practices of prayer and worship?

What is the church? What are the credal 'marks' of the church, and what are some of the meanings that have been given to the notion of catholicity?

What is the relation between scripture and tradition as authorities for Christian faith?

What does classical Christianity have to say about the nature of sin, and why is the sacrament of baptism said to remit sins?

How is the Christian faith expressed and supported by sacraments? What are sacraments?

What is grace? What are justification and sanctification, and how do they depend on grace?

"Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it": What is the primary basis and evidence for this claim, and what impact does it have on the formation of Christian culture?

Is death natural? What impact does belief in the resurrection of the body have on Christian ethics? On Christian political thinking?

Does it make sense to speak of a specifically Christian approach to the relation between justice and power?

What, Christianly understood, is the good life?

What is meant by 'the life of the world to come'?

How is the relationship between Christianity and culture changing in western society? Are Christianity's contributions to art, music, architecture, science, ethics, politics and social order, the academic life, etc., as significant today as once they were?

General Bibliography

- Allen, P. and Peter Hess, *Catholicism and Science*
 Aulen, G. *Christus Victor*
 Balthasar, H. U. von, *Mysterium Paschale*
 Barth, K. *Dogmatics in Outline / Church Dogmatics*
 Bernard Mathaler, *The Creed*
 Bonhoeffer, D. *Christology*
 Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*
 Chenu, M. D. *Is Theology a Science?*
 Chesterton, G. K. *Orthodoxy*
 Cory, C. and D. Landry, *The Christian Theological Tradition*
 Cullmann, O. *Early Christian Worship*
 Dalferth, I. *Theology and Philosophy*
 Dawson, C. *Enquiries into Religion and Culture*
 Denzinger, H. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*
 Dulles, A. *Models of the Church*
 Emery, G. *The Trinity*
 Farrow, D. *Ascension Theology*
 Theological Negotiations
 Ford, D. *The Modern Theologians*
 Gambero, L. *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*
 Gillespie, M. *The Theological Origins of Modernity*
 Gilson, E. *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*
 Gregory, B. *The Unintended Reformation*
 Guardini, R. *Freedom, Grace and Destiny*
 Gunton, C. *The Christian Faith / The Triune Creator / Yesterday and Today*
 Hall, D. J. *Professing the Faith*
 Harnack, A. *What is Christianity?*
 Hart, D. *The Story of Christianity / Atheist Delusions / The Beauty of the Infinite*
 Hart, T. *Faith Thinking*
 Healy, N. *Thomas Aquinas*
 Hengel, M. *The Atonement*
 Heron, A. *A Century of Protestant Theology / Table and Tradition*
 Hogg, D. *Anselm of Canterbury*
 Holifield, E. B. *Theology in America*
 Hodgson, P. & R. King, eds. *Christian Theology*
 Jenson, R. *Systematic Theology*
 John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life / The Splendor of Truth / Theology of the Body*
 Journet, C. *Theology of the Church*
 Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*
 Kerr, F. *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*
 Kreeft, P. *Catholic Christianity / The Philosophy of Tolkien*
 LaCugna, C. *God With Us*
 Levering, M. *Sacrifice and Community*
 Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man*
 Livingston, J., ed. *Modern Christian Thought*
 Lossky, V. *Orthodox Theology / The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*
 MacKintosh, H. *Types of Modern Theology*
 McCabe, H. *God Matters*
 McGrath, A. *Christianity: An introduction / Christian Theology*
 Mangina, J. *Karl Barth*
 May, G. *Creatio ex Nihilo*

Meilaender, G. *Faith and Faithfulness*
 Moltmann, J. *Jesus Christ for Today's World / The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*
 Neibuhr, R. *Christ and Culture*
 Neuhaus, R. J. *Death on a Friday Afternoon*
 Newbiggin, L. *The Household of God*
 Newman, J. H. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*
 Nichols, A. *Epiphany: A theological introduction to Catholicism / The Shape of Catholic Theology*
 O'Callaghan, P. *Christ our Hope: An introduction to Eschatology*
 O'Connor, F. *Spiritual Writings*
 O'Donnell, J. *The Mystery of the Triune God*
 O'Donovan, O. *Resurrection and Moral Order / The Desire of the Nations*
 Pannenberg, W. *The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions / Systematic Theology*
 Pelikan, J. *Credo / The Christian Tradition / Jesus through the Centuries*
 Perry, T. *Mary for Evangelicals*
 Peters, T. *God as Trinity*
 Rahner, K. *The Church and the Sacraments*
 Ramsey, B. *Beginning to Read the Fathers*
 Reardon, P. *Reclaiming the Atonement*
 Ratzinger, J. *Introduction to Christianity / Jesus of Nazareth / Called to Communion*
 Rist, J. *Augustine*
 Sayers, D. *The Mind of the Maker*
 Schleiermacher, F. *The Christian Faith*
 Schindler, D. C. *The Catholicity of Reason*
 Schmemmann, A. *The Eucharist*
 Schmitz K. *The Gift: Creation*
 Scotti, R. A., *Basilica*
 Smail, T. *The Giving Gift*
 Sonderegger, K. *Systematic Theology*
 Stark, R. *The Victory of Reason*
 Sullivan, J. E. *The Image of God*
 Topping, R. *Happiness and Wisdom: St Augustine's Early Theology of Education*
 Torrance, J. B. *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*
 Torrance, T. F. *The Mediation of Christ / The Trinitarian Faith / Atonement*
 Towey, A. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*
 Weinandy, T. *Athanasius / Does God Suffer?*
 Wood, R. *The Gospel according to Tolkien*
 Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the Question of God (5 vols)*
 Young, F. *The Making of the Creeds*

Dictionaries & Encyclopedias

The Blackwell Companion to Catholicism
The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine
The Catechism of the Catholic Church
The Catholic Encyclopaedia
Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms
Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible
Encyclopedia of Catholic Literature
Encyclopedia of Catholic Social Thought, Social Science, and Social Policy
New Dictionary of Christian Theology
Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church
Oxford Companion to Christian Thought

Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology / Oxford Handbook of Eschatology [etc.]
Religion Past and Present
Sacramentum Mundi

Journals

Communio
Concilium
Faith and Philosophy
First Things
Greek Orthodox Theological Review
International Journal of Systematic Theology
Journal of Early Christian Studies
Journal of Ecclesiastical History
Journal of Theological Studies
Journal for the Study of the New Testament
Literature and Theology
Medieval Philosophy and Theology
Modern Theology
Nova et Vetera
Pro Ecclesia
Recherches de Theologie Ancienne et Medievale
Scottish Journal of Theology
St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly
Studies in Christian Ethics
Theological Studies
The Thomist
Touchstone

Web Resources

www.biblestudytools.com
www.vatican.va/ www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
www.earlychurchtexts.com
www.creeds.net
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<http://dkbl.alexanderstreet.com> [Karl Barth Digital Library]
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<http://philreligion.nd.edu/research-initiatives/analytic-theology/lecture-series/>
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/christiantheology-philosophy/#Ato>

***Modern Latin Version of Christianity's
Nicene or Ecumenical Creed:***

*Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et
invisibilium.*

*Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum, Filium
Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia
saecula. Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum,
consubstantialiam Patri; per quem omnia facta
sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter
nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et
incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria
Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro
nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est,
et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et
ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et
iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos
et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.*

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et
vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui
cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et
conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et
unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam
Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in
remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto
resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi
saeculi. Amen.*



The Greek text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381/451 AD) is available here:

http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/constantinople/creed_of_constantinople.shtml

icon source:

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Nicene_Creed

ET used in the Catholic liturgy:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages: God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.