

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY – ST610

Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando)

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January 24-28, 2011

9:00am-4:00pm

Course Syllabus

Course Description

Trinitarian faith is vital to the life and health of the church. In this course we will explore the biblical/theological foundations, historical development, and contemporary approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity. After surveying the twentieth century trinitarian revival, we will carefully trace the historical development of trinitarian doctrine from the second through fifth centuries and then move to developments in the Reformation. We will also explore recent attempts to relate trinitarian doctrine to the church (its worship, identity and mission), human personhood, salvation, and interreligious dialogue.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students would be persuaded that trinitarian faith is vital to the life and health of the Church.
2. Students would gain a deeper understanding of the historical development of this doctrine through an engagement with primary texts (mid-second to early-fifth centuries and Reformation era).
3. Students would better understand the biblical foundations for trinitarian doctrine.
4. Students would become familiar with contemporary approaches to the Trinity.
5. Students would reflect methodologically on the proper “use” of this doctrine in the life of the church.
6. Students would better understand the integrative nature of this doctrine and relate it to other key doctrines including anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, etc.

Required Texts

Augustine, Saint. *The Trinity*. Translated by Edmund Hill, O.P. Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991. (ISBN: 0911782966)

Basil, Saint. *On the Holy Spirit*. New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press: 2001. (ISBN: 0913836745)

Hardy, Edward R., ed. *Christology of the Later Fathers*, Library of Christian Classics. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1954. (ISBN: 0664241522)

Letham, Robert. *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2004. (ISBN: 0875520006)

Recommended Texts

Ayres, Lewis. *Augustine and the Trinity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Dünzl, Franz. *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.

Grenz, Stanley J. *Rediscovering the Triune God: the Trinity in Contemporary Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

- Kostenberger, Andreas J. and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology Series. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Academic, 2008.
- Parry, Robin. *Worshipping Trinity: Coming Back to the Heart of Worship*. Milton Keynes; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005.
- Sanders, Fred. *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
- Thompson, John. *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Wainwright, Arthur. *The Trinity in the New Testament*. London: SPCK, 1962. [available as reprint through Wipf and Stock]

Course Requirements

1. **Class Participation:** Class participation includes the following:
 - a. Attendance of all class sessions. (If you must miss a class session, please send me an email prior to class letting me know you will be absent.)
 - b. Active participation in course discussion.
2. **Readings:** Some readings must be completed prior to the beginning of the first class session on Monday, January 24. All readings not found in the required texts will be available on the course website. Along with reading reports, students will also submit responses to short questions designed to help focus their reading. The final reading report is due Friday, February 18 by 5:00 pm.
3. **Theological Analysis of a Trinitarian Hymn:** Because trinitarian faith is expressed most clearly in the corporate worship of Father, Son and Spirit in the church, students will offer a theological analysis of a trinitarian hymn. The hymn analysis should be 5-6 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1" margins) and include the following three sections: (1) introduction (historical background on the hymn and observations about the structure of the hymn—especially with regard to its trinitarian “syntax”), (2) analysis of each verse (summarizing the main themes, identifying biblical echoes/allusions, discussing the trinitarian theology), (3) overall evaluation of the trinitarian theology presented in the hymn (what are the strengths and weaknesses of this hymn?) Be sure to include the texts of hymn in your analysis. **DUE: Monday, January 31 by 5:00 p.m.**
4. **Theological Paper:** Students will compose a 12 page essay (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1" margins) on “trinitarian” topic to be determined in conversation with the instructor. The instructor will post sample paper topics. The paper should (1) present a clear thesis, (2) reflect thoughtful and sympathetic engagement with the course texts, (3) engage primary-sources (i.e., church fathers), (4) offer critical analysis (and not merely summary) of the positions and views you engage and (5) consider the implications and significance of your investigation for the life of the church. **DUE: Friday, February 18 by 5:00 pm.**
5. **Preparing for the First Class Session:** Because of the compressed nature of this course, please note that there is some work you need complete in preparation for the first session. Please carefully read the section entitled “Preparing for the First Class Session” below.

Course Grade

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|-------------------|------------|
| Participation | 10% |
| Reading | 20% |
| Hymn Analysis | 25% |
| Theological Paper | <u>45%</u> |
| | 100% |

Course Schedule

NOTE: Reading with triple asterisk (***) should be completed prior the first class session. Readings with a single asterisk (*) will be discussed in class and should be completed the night before (if not sooner).

Monday, January 24

Topic: *Why does the Doctrine of the Trinity Matter?*

Topic: *Understanding the Contemporary Trinitarian Revival*

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/1, The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 295-333 (Online)
Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 271-98 (stop when he finishes discussing Rahner)

Topic: *Trinity in Scripture*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 17-85***

David S. Yeago, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma" (Online)***

C. Kavin Rowe, "Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics" (Online)***

Tuesday, January 25

Topic: *Pre-Nicene Trinitarian Theology: Tertullian and Origen*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 89-107*

Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 130-79 (Online)*

Origen, *On First Principles*, Preface, Book I, 1-39 (Online)

Topic: *Arian Crisis and the Council of Nicaea (325)*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 108-26

Topic: *Trinitarian Theology of Athanasius*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 127-45

Athanasius, "On the Incarnation" in Hardy, 55-86

Topic: *Trinitarian Theology of the Cappadocians: Basil of Caesarea*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 146-66

Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, intro and chapters 1-18, 7-79***

Wednesday, January 26

Topic: *Trinitarian Theology of the Cappadocians: Gregory of Nazianzus*

Gregory of Nazianzus, Third and Fifth "Theological Orations" (Hardy 160-176 and 194-214)*

Topic: *Council of Constantinople (381)*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 167-83.

Topic: *Trinitarian Theology of Augustine*

Augustine, Sermon 52 "On the Baptism of Jesus" (Online)*

Augustine, *The Trinity*, Books I-II (pp. 65-122), IV.25-31 (pp. 147-151, 171-77 only), V (pp. 186-201)

Thursday, January 27

Topic: Medieval Trinitarian Theology: Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Pars*, QQ. 33-38 (Online)

Topic: Trinity in the Reformation

Calvin, *Institutes*, I.3.1-I.3.29 (McNeill, 120-59) (online)*

The Commentary of Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg catechism, 119-120, 128-39 (online)*

Melanchthon on Christian doctrine: Loci communes, 11-38 (online)

Topic: Trinity and Worship

Robin Parry, *Worshipping Trinity*, 102-146 (online)***

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 407-24

Friday, January 28

Topic: Trinitarian Hermeneutics: Is the Son Eternally Subordinate to the Father?

Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Roles, Relationship, and Relevance*, 69-87 (online)*

Kevin Giles, "The Father and the Son Divided or Undivided in Power and Authority?" (Online)

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 377-406

Summary of Ware-Grudem/McCall-Yandell debate: <http://www.henrycenter.org/blog/?p=36>*

Keith E. Johnson, "Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son: An Augustinian Perspective," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?* (online)

Topic: Trinity and Salvation

Paul F. Knitter, "A New Pentecost? A Pneumatological Theology of Religions," *Current Dialogue* 19 (1991): 32-41. (Online)***

Amos Yong, "Discerning the Spirit(s) in the World Religions: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions" in *No Other Gods before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 37-61. (Online)

S. Mark Heim, "God's Diversity: A Trinitarian View of Religious Pluralism," *Christian Century* 118 (January 24 2001): 14-18. (Online)*

Keith E. Johnson, "Does the Doctrine of the Trinity Hold the Key to a Christian Theology of Religions?" in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 142-60 (online)

Topic: Trinity Reflected Human Relations

Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 83-99 (Online)

Thomas J. Scirghi, "The Trinity: A Model for Belonging in Contemporary Society," *Ecumenical Review* 54 (2002): 333-42. (Online)

Miroslav Volf *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 191-220. (Online)*

John Behr, "Trinitarian Being of the Church," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 48 (2004): 67-88. (Online)*

Topic: Trinity and Preaching

R. Albert Mohler, "How does the Doctrine of the Trinity Relate to Preaching?" *SBJT* 10 (2006): 86-92 (online)

Preparing for the First Class Session (January 24)

Students are required to complete the readings listed below (a little over 200pp) prior to the meeting of the first class on January 24. I recommend that you complete these readings in the order listed below (even though this order differs slightly from the order we will discuss these in the class). You will also find “response” questions listed below. Limit your responses to *no more than* 100 words. You are not writing an essay on which you will be graded—just providing a short answer to a question.

Robin Parry, *Worshipping Trinity*, 102-146 (online)

Response Question: *What does Parry mean when he says that worship songs should reflect a proper “trinitarian syntax”?*

Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 17-85

David S. Yeago, “The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma” (Online)

C. Kevin Rowe, “Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics” (Online)

Response Question: *Does the Bible contain a doctrine of the Trinity? Why or why not?*

Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, intro and chapters 1-18, 7-79

Response Question: *Does Basil believe the Holy Spirit is God? Why or why not?*

Paul F. Knitter, “A New Pentecost? A Pneumatological Theology of Religions,” *Current Dialogue* 19 (1991): 32-41. (Online)

Response Question: *How does Knitter use the doctrine of the Trinity (specifically trinitarian pneumatology) to affirm the validity of non-Christian religions?*

In approximately 400 words, answer the following question, “Why is the doctrine of the Trinity crucial to the church?”

When you come to class the first day, you will turn in your answers to the response questions along with a numerical percentage of the required reading listed above that you have completed at the beginning of class.