

## **INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY THEO 500-A**

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**Teaching Assistant(s):** TBD

**Office:** Shaffer Hall, 715  
**Location:** TBD  
**Time:** Tuesdays 6:30-9:30pm

### **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to many of the primary approaches, tasks, problems, and gifts related to systematic Christian theological reflection. Students survey the major doctrinal areas of reflection – e.g. Creation, Christology, Ecclesiology – from a variety of theological perspectives and explore implications for faithful living, Christian mission and witness, and critical issues facing the world’s peoples today.

### **Course Objectives**

*Knowing* – To understand key themes and questions within the major doctrinal loci of the Christian faith and life, to grasp the interconnected nature of theological claims, and to comprehend the variety of approaches to theological reflection today.

*Doing* – To acquire basic skills in identifying, analyzing, and integrating theological claims, to gain competence articulating the practical implications of any particular theological affirmation, and to increase confidence participating in theological reflection at the levels of interpersonal conversation, ecclesial ministry, social criticism, and public engagement.

*Being* – To broaden one’s perspective on the complexity and promise of theological work, to nurture habits of prayerful discernment, self-critical humility, intellectual rigor, playful curiosity, and gracious hospitality necessary for theological engagement with others, and ultimately to deepen one’s love of God and neighbor and one’s faithfulness to God’s work of righteousness in and for the world.

### **Required Texts**

Morse, Christopher. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. T & T Clark, 2009 (ISBN: 9780567027436, Price \$29.71 at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)).

## **Selected Readings (Made Available as PDF Chapters Online)**

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers From Prison*. Works, Volume 8. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.

Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. 40th anniversary ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1959.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*. Edited by Catherine Mowry LaCugna. New York: HarperOne, 1993.

Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. *God, Christ, Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology*. NY: Crossroad, 1989.

Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Sölle, Dorothee. *Thinking About God: An Introduction to Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1990.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.

Cheng, Patrick. *From Sin to Amazing Grace: Discovering the Queer Christ*. New York: Seabury Books, 2012.

Knitter, Paul F. and DiNoia, J.A. “What About Them? Christians and Non-Christians” in Placher, William C. *Essentials of Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Panikkar, Raimundo. “The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges: Three Kairological Moments of Christic Self-Consciousness” in John Hick and Paul Knitter. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.

Wright, N.T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.

Rieger, Joerg and Kwok Pui-lan. *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2012.

## **Course Requirements**

### **A. Class Participation – 22%**

**B. Twelve Weekly Theology Journals** (due Tuesdays by noon, 2 pages single-spaced, cite page numbers from the readings) – **24% (each worth 2 points)**

1. Summarize the key themes, questions, and claims regarding this doctrine made by each of the theologians assigned for the day.
2. Identify the theological questions that are most compelling or important to you within this doctrine and explore your own provisional claims.

**C. Three Theological Integration Papers** (due by class time weeks 5, 9, and 13, 5 pages double-spaced) – **54% (each worth 18 points)**

*Articulate a substantive theological position on an unresolved issue in the church or world (e.g. white privilege, climate change, economic inequality, the ordination of LGBTQ persons, evangelism/mission with the “nones”) that integrates 3 doctrinal loci in a coherent manner.*

\* All written work is to be submitted in Microsoft Word format, Times Roman font, 12pt type, 1 inch margins.

**Grading Criteria**

**Class Participation**

1. You attend every class period and are on time.
2. You demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the day.
3. You listen carefully to the instructor and to your classmates.
4. You are an active participant in the class discussions.

**Weekly Journal**

1. You accurately understand and summarize the readings.
2. You demonstrate intellectual curiosity in your theological exploration.

**Papers**

1. You accomplish what the assignment asks of you.
2. Your paper offers a clear thesis statement, follows a logical organization, is well developed, and is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
3. You enter into intelligent, critical conversation with the course texts and lectures.
4. You demonstrate a depth of insight in your theological claims.

**Scale**

97-100	A+	73-76	C
93-96	A	70-72	C-
90-92	A-	67-69	D+
87-89	B+	63-66	D
83-86	B	60-62	D-
80-82	B-	<60	F
77-79	C+		

## **Grading Policies**

1. There are no extensions for Weekly Theological Journal entries. If you do not submit your entry on time, you will receive a 0 for that week.
2. After the first few weeks, you will receive a numerical grade but no comments on your Weekly Journal entries. You will receive light comments and a numerical grade for your Theological Integration Papers.

## **Academic Policies and Support Services**

Attendance: The seminary expects that students will attend all classes, but students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions should not expect to pass the class (Academic Handbook, p. 17).

Academic Accommodations: Garrett-Evangelical is committed to providing a quality theological education and will provide reasonable accommodations for documented conditions. Students requiring specific assistance such as classroom changes, alternative ways of note-taking, different classroom procedures, or alternative testing formats are urged to request the appropriate accommodations from the director of academic studies/registrar. The director of academic studies/registrar can advise students on other support services and resources, for example, diagnostic testing. Students must complete a request for accommodations using the form available from the director of academic studies/registrar or through MyGETS documenting their condition(s) through appropriate verification methods.

Writing Support: Garrett-Evangelical offers two types of writing support: content editing and proofreading. Content editing is handled through the Writing Center, under the direction of Dr. Diane Capitani. Contact Dr. Capitani at dianecapitani@aol.com to make an appointment. The student proofreading program is supervised by Ms. Krista McNeil, director of academic studies and registrar. Papers can be sent electronically to garrett-proofreaders@googlegroups.com and proofread using Microsoft Track Changes. Please allow at least 24 hours for documents that are 10 pages or less.

Plagiarism: Garrett-Evangelical takes the question of academic integrity and plagiarism very seriously. All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Students are expected to understand and abide by the plagiarism policy (see Academic Handbook, p. 69-75).

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1: Introduction to Theological Reflection**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapters 1-3  
Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison*, Prologue

### **Week 2: Theological Method**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 4  
Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Chapters 1-2

### **Week 3: Revelation**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapters 5-6  
Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, Chapters 2-4

### **Week 4: God**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 7  
LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, Chapter 4

### **Week 5: Creation**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 10  
Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*, Chapters 1-3

### **Week 6: Anthropology**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 12  
Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, Chapter 7

### **Week 7: Jesus Christ**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 8  
Sölle, *Thinking About God*, Chapters 10-11

### **Week 8: Holy Spirit**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 9  
Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, Chapter 2

### **Week 9: Salvation**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 11

Updated 11/14/19

Cheng, *From Sin to Amazing Grace*, Chapters 1-4

**Week 10: Christianity Among the Religions**

Knitter and DiNoia, *Essentials of Christian Theology*, Chapter 8

Panikkar, *The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges*, Chapter 6

**Week 11: Eschatology**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 14

Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, Chapters 13-14

**Week 12: The Church**

Morse, *Not Every Spirit*, Chapter 13

Rieger and Pui-lan, *Occupy Religion*, Chapter 6

**Week 13: Concluding Thoughts on Theological Reflection**