

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

**Instructor:** Timothy R. Eberhart

**Office Phone:** 847-866-3972

**Email:** [timothy.eberhart@garrett.edu](mailto:timothy.eberhart@garrett.edu)

**Office Hours:** By Email Appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Aaron Dorsey ([aaron.dorsey@garrett.edu](mailto:aaron.dorsey@garrett.edu))

**Office:** Shaffer Hall, 715

**Location:** Room 207

**Time:** Tuesdays 1:00-4:00pm

### **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).

## **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 Mondays by 10pm, 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 supremacy, climate emergency, economic inequality, *Queer Justice*, 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**

94-100	A	77-79	C+
90-93	A-	74-76	C
87-89	B+	70-73	C-
84-86	B	60-69	D
80-83	B-		

**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**

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the [Academic Handbook](#) for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

### **Writing**

- Academic integrity and [plagiarism](#): (See 20-21 Handbook, 12, 76-82). Instructors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.
- Writing and citations: The *Turabian Manual for Writers* and the *Chicago Manual of Style* footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online [here](#). In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

### **Attendance and Class Participation**

- Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed. All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 20-21 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (20-21 Handbook, 20)
- Some faculty may limit the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session.

### **Academic Accommodations**

- Garrett's *Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities* policy and process is set out in the Academic Handbook (20-21 Handbook, 12) and the Academic Accommodations section on <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services>.
- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or

experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact Student Access (email: student.access@garrett.edu / phone: 847-467-5530) to move forward with the established accommodation process. If you already have established accommodations with Student Access, please contact the instructor prior to the first class session so the instructor can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential under FERPA regulations.

- *Extensions*: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (20-21 Handbook, 20)

## 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  
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**