

**Theological Method**  
**Spring 2023**  
**Instructor: Anne Joh, Ph.D**  
**ZOOM:**  
**Wednesdays 1:00-4:00 pm CDT**

Goal: The goal of this class is to introduce seminar participants to the several dominant approaches to theology with special emphasis on methodological issues. This investigation will deal primarily the matter of sources and norms in the work of constructive theology. We will, however, also become familiar with theological method that is interdisciplinary through readings in theologies anchored in interdisciplinary research as well as read and analyze texts from other disciplines in order discern how interdisciplinary method takes shape and its relevancy for constructive theology.

Aims of this course are:

1. to acquaint the students with theological method by reviewing several approaches to theology;
2. to help students learn the skill of distinguishing how these different approaches to theological reflection identify the sources of their reflection and the norms by which they are appropriated;
3. to create a competence in methodological discernment which will foster confidence for students in their ability to articulate an understanding of several significant modes of theological reflection in the contemporary context.

### **SEMINAR PROCEDURES**

The seminar meets once a week. There will be NO weekly seminar papers prepared by participants. Instead, the emphasis each week will be on every member completing the assigned reading and submitting questions for discussion and reflection. Here is how I propose working.

Each seminar day will be planned by a CONVERSANT. Conversant have the primary responsibility of planning discussion for the seminar. They will formulate these plans based on their own reading of the material and after studying questions submitted that week by all the other seminar members. Conversant will study these questions, looking for ways to include them in the seminar by ordering and combining them in various relations. In other words, the seminar discussion is to be constructed out of materials provided by seminar members' questions. The Conversant will also provide a one-page socio-cultural-politico- bio, including one historical event within the 5 years prior to the publication of the book under discussion.

At the seminar itself, conversant may offer introductory remarks to set the stage for our conversation. In fact, I encourage conversant to offer, in these introductory remarks, some brief orienting thoughts about how seminar members interrogated and assessed the week's readings. Use of PPT or any pedagogy the conversant finds helpful is

allowed in the course. The aim at each seminar is well-structured and informed conversation based in CAREFUL reading of the week's text, deliberately exploring key questions and issues. I will serve as moderator for each seminar, and periodically provide short lectures.

All seminar members will upload their questions on Moodle course site by 5:00p.m, the day before the seminar. Conversant will gather these questions the day before the seminar, study them carefully, then sometime before the seminar create an agenda for our seminar discussion. Questions submitted by each seminar member, however many in number, should take up no more than one page in length. Aim for brief, crisp, clearly articulated questions. If you develop your question in paragraph form, make sure your question has a clear, crisp, "sharp" edge to it.

Here are further examples of the kinds of questions seminar members may ask:

- 1) Clarification - seeking greater clarity about the nature of a given writer's position, about connections between readings, or about issues that continue from seminar to seminar.
- 2) Critique - identifying and briefly developing weaknesses you perceive in an assigned text.
- 3) Implication - exploring the implications for cultural critique, theology or something else, which you see generated by the assigned reading of the week.

**SPECIAL ADMONITION:** Your questions are the material from which the conversant will shape the seminar dialogue of the week. **Complete your reading promptly, and please submit questions regularly and on time.**

### **Office Hours and other Protocols**

#### Office Hours:

Part of my job is to offer office hours to advisees and students enrolled in my courses. Appointments are scheduled individually as I do not hold set office hours. You can do so by sending me an email request. I prefer phone conversation rather than video meetings. We want to be sure that our time is used fruitfully. Meetings should have a clear agenda so think about what you want to discuss/accomplish during the meeting. Learning to set clear agenda for a meeting is part of professionalization. When you request a meeting let me know in a few words what the purpose of the meeting is. Do not beat around the bush. Be clear and transparent. The day before our scheduled meeting, send me another email with no more than a one page of clear purpose and content of what you want to discuss.

You do not have to craft a perfect email to me. It does not have to have the perfect narrative. Even bullet-point agenda of issues/topics to discuss is fine. This will help orient our meeting and gives me a heads-up. This also helps to take the pressure off having to feel you must perform during our meeting of your brilliance. If you need to cancel, I need an email from you that you need to reschedule or cancel.

\*Shame spiral: If you are having difficulty with the course, it's a good idea to reach out sooner than later. Many of us grapple with shame and fall into the trap of, "I'll get in touch when I have everything together." Please avoid this and just reach out and not wait.

Drafts/Papers: If you want feedback at the meeting a good rule of thumb is the number of pages to be read divided by 2 is the number of days in advance it should be sent to me.

Post Meeting follow-up: I highly recommend you send me a follow-up email highlighting our conversation's important points and resolutions, and especially important decisions or agreements that both of us have made. E.g., deadlines. If we continue with conversations and emails, keep everything in one single thread of emails so I can keep a track of our conversations' evolution.

Letter of Recommendation: It's fine to request LORs via email. Include all information as necessary for me to write a specific and helpful letter on your behalf. This may include any paper you wrote for me, your CV, and any statement, letter or essay you will submit with your application. I do not take LORs lightly and need all relevant information 4 weeks in advance of its due date to craft a letter I am willing to sign off.

### **Proposed Class Schedule**

Feb. 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Introduction
Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> :	Veneema, <i>Introducing Theological Methods</i>
Feb. 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	NO Class, Ash Wednesday
March 1 <sup>st</sup> :	Veneema, Part II
March 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Bray, <i>Grave Attending</i>
March 15 <sup>th</sup> :	Bray, Part II
March 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	Spring Break
March 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Butler, <i>What World is This?</i>
April 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Maia, <i>Trading Futures</i>
April 12 <sup>th</sup> :	Maia, Part II
April 19 <sup>th</sup> :	Keller, <i>Facing Apocalypse</i>
April 26 <sup>th</sup> :	Keller, Part II
May 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Marovich, <i>Sister Death</i>

May 10<sup>th</sup>: Marovich, Part II

### **EVALUATION:**

Conversant responsibility: 2 X 20 = 40%

Class participation/questions: 30%

Final Paper: 30%. No longer than 25 pages excluding bibliography. Final research paper will engage with the work of a major text by a theologian of your choice (in consultation with faculty) to offer a coherent and cogent analysis AND CRITIQUE of their methodology. **DUE MAY 19<sup>th</sup>**.

### **GRADING RUBRIC**

#### **The Superior Paper (A/A-)**

Thesis: Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear.

Structure: Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences.

Analysis: Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material.

Logic and argumentation: All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes) which illuminate thesis.

Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices.

#### **The Good Paper (B+/B)**

Thesis: Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality.

Structure: Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences.

Analysis: Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear.

Logic and argumentation: Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.

Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice.

### Course Bibliography

Bray, Karen. *Grave Attending: A Political Theology for the Unredeemed*. NY: Fordham University Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-0823286867

Butler, Judith. *What World Is This: A Pandemic Phenomenology*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2022.

Keller, Catherine. *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy, and Other Last Chances*. New York: Orbis Press, 2021. ISBN: 9781626984134

Maia, Filipe. *Trading Futures: A Theological Critique of Financialized Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022. ISBN: 978-1478018780

Marovich, Beatrice. *Sister Death: Political Theologies for Living and Dying*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2023

Rivera, Mayra. *Poetics of the Flesh*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-822306013-1

Veeneman, Mary M. *Introducing Theological Method: A Survey of Contemporary Theologians and Approaches*. NY: Baker Academic Press, 2017. ISBN: 1-4934-1154-2

#### ZOOM:

W. Anne Joh (she/her) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: methods in theology

Time: Feb 1, 2023 01:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Wed, until May 10, 2023, 15 occurrence(s)

Feb 1, 2023 01:00 PM

Feb 8, 2023 01:00 PM

Feb 15, 2023 01:00 PM

Feb 22, 2023 01:00 PM

Mar 1, 2023 01:00 PM

Mar 8, 2023 01:00 PM

Mar 15, 2023 01:00 PM

Mar 22, 2023 01:00 PM

Mar 29, 2023 01:00 PM

Apr 5, 2023 01:00 PM

Apr 12, 2023 01:00 PM

Apr 19, 2023 01:00 PM

Apr 26, 2023 01:00 PM

May 3, 2023 01:00 PM

May 10, 2023 01:00 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly:

<https://garrett.zoom.us/meeting/tZAsfu6spzoqGtIhY3dTfvfPI8UIJ6wT7z2F/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGsrzItHt2UsBmBRpwIBYr4KOjxmH5fjbd0lCa2BxRVdAXGH7p3PpgpB-yH>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://garrett.zoom.us/j/84197491006?pwd=ZnFXUC9zeU8zSmFuQXZJRHdrbnZSQTO9>

Meeting ID: 841 9749 1006

Passcode: 771387

One tap mobile

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+13126266799,,84197491006# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 305 224 1968 US

+1 689 278 1000 US

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 205 0468 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 507 473 4847 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

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