

Theology Graduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2024

THEO 420-001: Seminar, Apocalyptic & the Apocalypse

Combined with

THEO 5XX

Lupieri, Edmondo

Monday 10:25AM – 12:55PM

Sin(s) and Redemption(s): From the Fear of the End to the Birth of Christology

In this course we will analyze diversities and transformations of early Christianity and its surrounding world from the roots of apocalyptic thinking in 4th-3rd Centuries BCE Judaism to the explosion of apocalyptic literature after the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE) and until the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE).

After having analyzed texts from the earlier phases of the Enochic as well as canonical literature (Daniel, 2-3Isaiah, Books of Enoch), we will focus on the flourishing of apocalyptic literature in later texts (4Ezra, 2Baruch, the Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah, the Apocalypse of Abraham) with particular and specific attention to the canonical Apocalypse of John. Time permitting, we will also get a glimpse of some Christian Gnostic apocalypses (e.g.: the Apocalypse of Peter). We will study the interaction of the social and political situation and the production of apocalyptic texts on the one side, while also studying the implications of the development of an apocalyptic worldview for Christian theology (the need for a superhuman savior figure, the origins of the notion of purgatory, the anticipation of the end of the physical world, etc.). In the final part of the course, we will examine the foundations for what will be a new wave of Christian apocalypses, profoundly different from earlier works.

THEO 427-001: St Paul's Contribution to Christianity

Pauline Letters: Theology, Ethnicity, Philosophy

Lee, Brian

Tuesday, Thursday 10:00AM – 11:15AM

This course offers a graduate-level introduction to the study of the Pauline Letters within their historical and cultural contexts. Examination will be given to 1) the Pauline epistles in their first-century context, and their earliest interpretations; and 2) recent methods and trends in Pauline studies, including feminist, queer, African-American, and postcolonial interpretation, as well as "New Perspective" and Post-New Perspective developments. Special attention will be given to key Pauline theological concepts, to situating Paul's mission to the gentiles within ethnic conceptions of religion in the Roman world, and the complex relationship between Jewish traditions and Greco-Roman philosophical concepts in Pauline thought. Student assignments will be tailored according to three tracks: Greek exegesis; Pastoral integration; Ethics and Theology.

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THEO 440-001: Seminar in Syst Theo
Dickinson, Colby
Wednesday 10:25AM – 12:55PM

This graduate seminar will conduct detailed overviews and assessments of major systematic theological themes and theologians throughout history, from antiquity to contemporary contexts. Each weekly class will consist in both (a) discussion of major theological themes covered in the main course text (e.g. Revelation, Trinity, Creation, Jesus Christ, Church, etc.) and (b) student presentations and structured analysis of major historical systematic theologies (e.g. Augustine, Aquinas, Newman, de Lubac, von Balthasar, Schillebeeckx, Gutiérrez, Johnson, Tracy, among others). The first portion of class will be a student led discussion of a particular theologian, including presentation and analysis in handout form of their major theological works, the ordering of their contents, major themes and omissions and substantial analysis of their theology on the whole, in addition to a sample of their work shared in advance with the class. The second portion of the class will consist in a conversation about the readings for the day from the text edited by Fiorenza and Galvin.

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THEO 460-001: Sem Hist of Theo

Combined with

THEO 317

Witherington, Derrick

Tuesday, Thursday 8:30AM – 9:45AM

In this course we will examine a selection of theological issues, topics, and debates which characterized Christian Theology from the Patristic through the Medieval Period. This course is designed neither as a primer in Christian doctrine, nor as a historical survey of the Church, but is rather intended as an engaged, critical, and experiential attempt to enter into the thought world of Ancient and Medieval Christianity. In order to do this, the course will be focused on an examination of particular spiritual practices – including prayer, asceticism, monastic life, pilgrimage, liturgy, sacraments, etc. – which are seen as embodying and growing out of the theological assumptions, worldviews, and debates of the periods in which they are embedded. In the course of our survey, we will selectively encounter a variety of authors including Perpetua, Athanasius, Augustine of Hippo, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Hildegard of Bingen, Hadewijch of Brabant, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and Benedict of Nursia. At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to not only describe these periods' major topics and themes, but also be able to understand how these topics and themes emerged out of and gave continual expression to concrete spiritual practices (*lex orandi, lex credendi*: the law of prayer is the law of belief).

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THEO 478-001: Issues in Medical Ethics

Combined with

THEO 393-001: Seminar Issues in Medical Ethics

Haker, Hille

Tuesday, Thursday 1:00PM – 2:15PM

This seminar will examine ethical issues of suffering, health, and disability. We will examine different understandings and traditions of suffering, from the Stoic disavowal of suffering to the experiences and narratives of suffering from medical trauma (accidents, illness) and chronic illnesses, and the theological and ethical interpretations of suffering. We will analyze different medical and medical-ethical understandings of health as well as medicine's role in inflicting suffering on persons and communities. Finally, the understanding of disability has changed considerably over the last decades, and we will survey some recent publications regarding the history of disability policies, and disability studies. Designed for students with interests in Bioethics and Christian Ethics, this course is part of a year-long examination of suffering, health, and disability. All students are welcome to take this course as a stand-alone semester, or as a follow-up course of the Fall 2023 course (Suffering, Health, Disability, and the Bible). In this course, the group from the College of Arts and Sciences will regularly discuss the bioethical questions with a parallel course offered to students enrolled the MA and Doctoral programs in Bioethics and Healthcare Mission Leadership in the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics.

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THEO 530-001:

Divito, Robert A

Tuesday, Thursday 11:30AM – 12:45PM

The discovery in 1947 of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” at Khirbet Qumran in the Judean desert ranks as perhaps the greatest archaeological find of the 20th century, one which has revolutionized all aspects of research on the Bible and early Jewish history. Accordingly, this course is designed as a comprehensive introduction to the Scrolls and an overview of the current state of Qumran studies. The goal is to provide participants in the course with an opportunity to examine a significant number of the most important texts to have come to light over the last 50 years, on their own terms and in the context of the ancient Near East and Second Temple Judaism.

The course will be divided into two parts: (a) an introduction to the field of research and (b) an examination of several major texts. In the first part of the course, where the format is largely lecture, the goal is to provide an overview of the field and of the discovery of the scrolls, the debate over the archaeology of the site of Qumran, the nature of the “library” discovered, key questions driving current scholarly debate, background for an initial reading of the texts, and strategies for analyzing the documents themselves. Topics include an overview of an historical context for the Scrolls in Second Temple Judaism, the discovery and identification of the texts in question, the archaeology of Qumran, the emerging biblical canon, and of course the identification and origins of the community thought to be responsible for the scrolls.

The second part of the course will be devoted to a careful reading and analysis of major documents. Here the format will be a modification of the traditional seminar, with students working in pairs (if possible), presenting each text in accordance with the strategies outlined in the first part of the course, and responsible for the text’s discussion. The number of presentations for each “team” will depend, of course, upon the number of students and the number of texts we can reasonably study in the semester. Using his/her presentation as a point of departure, each student will then write a major paper, due at the end of the semester, devoted to the interpretation and analysis of a single text, or a passage or group of passages within it, or to the examination of a specific problem. Representative texts to be included here are The Damascus Document (CD), The Rule of the Community (1QS), the Commentary on Habakkuk (1QpHab), 11 QMelchizedek, (11QM), the “Son of God” fragment (4Q246), The Thanksgiving Hymns (Hodayot) (1QH), and the so-called halakhic letter, Some Works of the Torah (4QMMT).

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THEO 575-001: Religious Ethics & Socl Theory

French, William

Friday 10:25AM – 12:55PM

This course will survey some of the major classic figures who shaped Christian ethical understanding. We will examine developments across the centuries and attend to the distinctive perspectives of Protestant and Catholic theologians. We will examine also some of the major voice of Protestant and Catholic ethics writing in the last half of the 20th century as they struggle with new challenges and seek to engage moral reasoning with new sensitivities. We will pay close attention to changes in Christian thinking about war and peace issues and about humanity's relationship to the rest of the natural world.

Reading List

St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Politics and Ethics*, trans. and edited by Paul E. Sigmund (New York: WW Norton, 1988).

Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings, ed. by John Dillenberger (Anchor Books, 1962).

Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (Westminster John Knox reprint 2013).

Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love your Enemies: discipleship, Pacifism and Just War Theory* (Augsburg Fortress 1994).

James Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*

Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1983)

Richard McCormick, *Corrective Vision: Explorations in Moral Theology* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1994).

Thomas Berry, *The Great Work* (Bell Tower 1999).

Course Requirements:

1 Midterm take-home exam.

2/ Final Paper 15-20 pages on a topic drawn from the readings.