

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at Western University
Fall 2014

Systematic Theology 5111A
Fundamental Theology
Tuesday, 7:00-8:50, Room 108

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Office hours by appointment

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A foundational course considering the nature of divine revelation, faith as humanity's response to God's revealing activity, the inspiration and interpretation of scripture, the nature of tradition, and theological method. (2 hours; antirequisite: the former Dogmatic Theology 101A)

B. GOALS

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge:

To gain a sound understanding of how God's revelation in Jesus and the Spirit is made known to us through scripture and the tradition and how we respond to that revelation through both faith and reason.

To gain an understanding of the relationship of the roles of authority, scholarship, and personal exploration in the theological tradition.

To gain an understanding of the continuity and development of the theological tradition.

Skills:

To learn to balance the quest for certainty with the sometimes limited and developmental character of theological understanding.

To learn to integrate philosophical approaches into a theological framework.

To learn to reflect on how to express the Christian faith in the context of contemporary cultural challenges and opportunities.

Attitudes:

To grow in recognition of the benefit of shared dialogue and shared exploration of theological issues.

To exhibit a sense of wonder and a desire to probe more deeply into the mysteries of the faith.

C. ASSESSMENT

A reading and reflection paper on the nature of faith (source article on reserve in library); due **Oct. 21** (5-6 pages, 6 pages **maximum**) (25%)

A reading and reflection paper on the nature of revelation according to *Dei Verbum*; due **Nov. 11** (5-6 pages, 6 pages **maximum**) (25%)

A final, written examination, during the exam period (35%)

Participation in discussions. Each class students will submit a written comment or question (one paragraph) based on the week's readings (15%).

D. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004 (available at the UWO bookstore). Additional required and recommended readings will be put on reserve in the library.

Documents of Vatican II

E. STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Week 1 (Sept. 9): Introduction; Philosophy and Theology; Mystery

Recommended Reading: John Haught, "Mystery", *What is God?*, pp.115-31.

Week 2 (Sept. 16): Mystery and Revelation in Word and Event

Required Readings: *Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)*; Richard Gaillardetz and Catherine Clifford, "A Theology of Divine Revelation", *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II*, pp. 31-38.

Week 3 (Sept. 23): Faith; Tradition: Content and Dynamic Process

Required Readings: Congar, pp. 9-33

Week 4 (Sept. 30): Tradition and Traditions; The Spirit as Subject of Tradition

Required Readings: Congar, pp. 33-58

Week 5 (Oct. 7): The Church as Subject of Tradition: Magisterium and the Faithful

Required Readings: Congar, pp. 58-81; Jared Wicks, "The Levels of Teaching by the Catholic Magisterium", *Doing Theology*, pp. 237-39.

Recommended Reading: International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, 2014, #48-80, #113-119 (not on reserve)

Week 6 (Oct. 14): Scripture and Tradition; The Canon of Scripture

Required Readings: Congar, pp. 83-111

Week 7 (Oct. 21): Tradition as Historical; Development of Doctrine

Required Readings: Congar, pp. 112-128

Week 8 (Oct. 28): Doing Theology and Being a Theologian

Week 9 (Nov. 4): The Contemporary Cultural Milieu

Required Readings: *Gaudium et Spes*, sections 1-22; John Dool, “Authenticity and Ecclesiology: Charles Taylor and the Post-Conciliar Challenge”, pp.1-16

Recommended Reading: Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (also known as *The Ethics of Authenticity*)

Week 10 (Nov. 11): Understanding Vatican II

Required Readings: Dool, pp.16-21; John O’Malley, “Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?”, *Theological Studies*, v.67, 2006, pp. 3-33.

Week 11 (Nov. 18): Apologetics Today; The Nature of Dialogue

Required Readings: Bishop Donald Bolen, “Giving an Account of Our Hope”, *Origins*, v.41, no.6, June 2011.

Recommended Reading: Francis Cardinal George, “Making All Things New: Notes on a New Apologetics”, *The Difference God Makes: A Catholic Vision of Faith, Communion, and Culture*, pp. 59-76.

Week 12 (Nov. 25): Apologetics and Atheism

Required Reading: Neil Ormerod, “Theology and the New Atheism: Science, Religion, and Metaphysics”, *Theology*, v.116, no.3, 2013, pp.187-94.

Recommended Reading: Nicholas Lash, “Where Does the God Delusion Come From?” *New Blackfriars*, v.88, Sept. 2007, pp.507-21.

Week 13 (Dec. 2): Conclusion and Review

F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Students are responsible for knowing the University’s academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. These can all be found at the University’s website (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>). Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

Submission of Assignments and Tests: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates as given above. Assignments may not be dropped off at King’s or submitted electronically.

It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. For a serious reason, a student may approach the professor before the due-date, and may be granted an extension at the discretion of the professor. Any medical reasons will be confirmed by proper documentation as approved by the Dean’s Office. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests or the examination, unless approved in advance by Student Services at the University or King’s.

Students who miss tests will negotiate a “make-up” date with the professor. Any medical reasons will be confirmed by proper documentation as approved by the Dean’s Office.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Selection and Registration of Courses: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

READING AND REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the article by Louis Roy, “Three Faith Dynamisms”, *New Blackfriars*, v. 81, no.958, Dec. 2000, pp.541-548 (on reserve). Briefly outline and explain the three dynamisms Roy puts forth. Toward the end of the article, Roy elucidates some of the pastoral issues involved with the tendency among some believers to privilege one of the faith dynamisms as more central than the others. Reflect on which of the dynamisms (if any) tends to be predominant in your own faith life. Which tendency (if any) do you encounter most in other people? How would you attempt to help them come to a more integrated approach to faith? (Due Oct. 21, 5-6 pages)

2. *Dei Verbum* says that Christ is the sum total of revelation (#2) and that no new public revelation is to be expected before the end of time (#4); yet it also affirms that God continues to converse with the church (#8). In light of these two affirmations, discuss the nature and significance of revelation. Give a brief analysis of the pertinent passages of the document. More importantly, in light of what we have studied in Congar’s *The Meaning of Tradition*, reflect on the nature of revelation in relation to the following questions: How does God make himself known to us? Is revelation complete or is it ongoing? Provide some examples to illustrate your answers. (Due Nov. 11, 5-6 pages)