

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at *The University of Western Ontario*
Winter 2025

Systematic Theology 5212B
Doctrine of God
Tuesday 9:30-12:20, Room 144

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Office hours by Appointment

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The development of the Church's understanding of God as Triune. Biblical, patristic, medieval, and contemporary approaches to the mystery of God are considered. Special attention is given to the connection of Trinitarian doctrine to the experience of salvation. (3 hours; antirequisite: the former Dogmatic Theology 201A).

B. GOALS

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

Knowledge:

To gain an appreciation for the biblical foundations, key historical developments, and contemporary questions and avenues of thought in regard to the mystery of the Triune God.

To gain a sound understanding of the key trinitarian teachings of the church, how and why they developed, and the erroneous positions to which they responded.

To gain a sound understanding of the intertwining of the doctrine of the Trinity and other doctrines concerning the mystery of human salvation.

Skills:

To learn to integrate principles of Trinitarian thought into one's independent exploration of theological issues.

To learn to reflect on one's own operative theology of God and the operative theology of God of others, and how these are strengthened and challenged by a robustly Trinitarian theology of God.

To learn to relate traditional teachings to contemporary questions and issues.

To learn to identify and constructively critique the Trinitarian perspective in a given text or thinker.

Attitudes:

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

To develop a sensitivity to the nature and limitations of our language about God.

To grow in a sense of the centrality of the mystery of the Trinity to Christian faith and practice and to develop an openness to ongoing exploration of that mystery.

C. ASSESSMENT

Take home test (6-8 pages) distributed Feb. 4, to be returned **Feb. 11** (35%); submit by OWL.

A final, written examination during the exam period (date to be determined by the Dean); submit by OWL. (40%)

Participation in discussions; Students may also submit written comments or questions (one paragraph) based on the week's readings as a contribution to this grade. (25%)

Assignments are due by 11:55 PM on the dates indicated. 10% per day will be deducted from assignments handed in late unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

D. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

Required: Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*. New York: Paulist Press, 2nd ed., 2014, available at Chapters, Amazon.

Course Readings: available on OWL.

E. SCHEDULE, TOPICS & READINGS and STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Section 1: The Mystery of God and Scriptural Foundations

Week 1 (Jan. 7):

- Introduction and Overview: The Mystery of God
- God in the Old Testament (O'Collins, ch. 1)

Week 2 (Jan. 14):

- The Trinity in the Life of Jesus and the Writings of Paul (O'Collins, chs. 2 and 3)
- The Gospels; Summary and Introduction to the Fathers (O'Collins, ch. 4)

Section 2: Patristic Developments

Week 3 (Jan. 21):

- The Pre-Nicene Fathers: Justin and Irenaeus (O'Collins, ch.5)
- The Pre-Nicene Fathers: Tertullian (Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*); Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition

Week 4 (Jan. 28):

- The Arian Controversy (Thomas Marsh, from "The Great Controversy", *The Triune God*; selection from Athanasius, *Orations Against the Arians*)
- Nicea and Constantinople (O'Collins, ch.6 and ch.7, pp.127-34); Introduction to the Cappadocian Fathers

Week 5 (Feb. 4):

- The Cappadocian Fathers (Catherine LaCugna, from *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*; selections from Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzus)
- The Cappadocians; Summary of Patristic Developments

Section 3: Medieval Trinitarian Theology

Week 6 (Feb. 11):

- Augustine (Eugene Teselle, *Augustine the Theologian*; Augustine, selection from *On the Trinity*)

Reading Week

Week 7 (Feb. 25):

- Richard of St. Victor (Ewert Cousins, "A Theology of Interpersonal Relations", *Thought*, v. XLV, spring, 1970; Richard of St. Victor, *Book Three of the Trinity*)

Week 8 (Mar. 4):

- Aquinas (Brian Davies, from *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*; selections from *Summa Theologiae*); Summary of Medieval Theology (O'Collins, pp.135-51)

Section 4: Appropriating the Tradition Today

Week 9 (Mar. 11):

- The Contemporary Trinitarian Renewal
- The Trinitarian Mystery of Love (Walter Kasper, from "The Trinitarian Mystery of God", *The God of Jesus Christ*)

- Trinitarian Persons, Actions, and Missions (Gilles Emery, from “Returning to the Creative and Saving Action of the Trinity”, *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*)

Week 10 (Mar. 18):

- Trinitarian actions (cont'd) (Emery; O'Collins, ch.10)
- The Person of the Spirit (O'Collins, ch. 9; Yves Congar, from *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, v.3)
- The Procession of the Spirit (Alasdair Heron, “The *Filioque* Clause”, *One God in Trinity*)

Week 11 (Mar. 25):

- In the Image of The Triune God: Trinity and Grace (Anne Hunt, “Trinity, Grace, and the Moral Life”, *The Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of the Christian Faith*)
- Deification and Life in the Trinity (Daniel Keating, “Trinity and Salvation: Christian Life as an Existence in the Trinity”, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*)
- The Paschal Mystery and the Triune God (Bruno Forte, “The Trinitarian History of Easter”, from *The Trinity as History*)

Week 12 (April 1):

- The Paschal Mystery and the Triune God, cont'd (Forte)
- Trinitarian Communion, Church, and Eucharist (Michael Figura, “Church and Eucharist in the Light of the Trinitarian Mystery”)
- Teaching the Mystery (Richard Gaillardetz, “To Teach of the Trinity”)

F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

Accommodations for Tests/Examinations: Students with disabilities work with Accessibility Services which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students are responsible for seeking accommodation with appropriate documentation, prior to writing tests/examinations, if they are of the view that their performance may be affected by extenuating circumstances. **All students requiring academic accommodations for tests and examinations must use the services offered through King's University College.**

How to Request Academic Accommodation – King's Students:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/courses-enrolment/exams-and-tests/medical-accommodation/>

UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

<https://www.eng.uwo.ca/files/undergraduate/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

Scholastic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>. Please note that Turnitin analysis now also includes AI detection.

St. Peter's Seminary is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Within this course, use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools [such as Chat GPT] is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation.

Copyright re: Course Material: Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty Members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a Faculty Member. Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member is interested in posting a student's answers or papers on the course web site he/she should ask for the student's written permission. (Commercial use of Course material - <http://umd.edu/legal/commercial.html>)

Scholarly Citation: According to the policy adopted by the faculty of St. Peter's Seminary, all

citations, references and bibliographies in written assignments are to follow the formatting prescribed in the Chicago/Turabian Manual of Style. Footnotes are to be used, rather than author-date references in the body of the text. Please review and consult the summary provided by Kenrick-Glennon Seminary at <https://www.kenrick.edu/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Academic-Papers-and-Citations.pdf> for further information.

Submission of Assignments: It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

Students who are unable to hand in assignments or take examinations for legitimate reasons must consult with the instructor. If the reason is medical, students may be required to provide a note from a doctor. Ordinarily, all assignments and exams will be made up at a later date. In certain circumstances, the final grading scheme may be re-weighted if the missed assignment is of a low weight.

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.

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for everyone and with professionalism in all classroom activities. Laptops and other electronic devices may be used for classroom academic activities only. The use of such devices must always be in accord with the common good of the whole learning community as specified by the instructor. The instructor may choose at any time to limit their use for instructional purposes or because of the disruptive use of such devices.

You are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

Support Services:

Information about Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development (formerly Services for Students with Disabilities) at King's is available at <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The website for Academic Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <https://uwo.ca/health/services/students/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

These services are not meant to replace those offered at the Seminary but may be beneficial to

our students after consultation with the appropriate instructors, administrators, and formators.

GRADING SCALE

- A+ 90 - 100% – *for profound and creative work*: exceptional performance with clear evidence of original thinking; a superior grasp of the subject matter with sound critical evaluations; strong evidence of an extensive knowledge base;
- A 80 - 89% – *for excellent work*: outstanding performance with indication the student is approaching some original thinking; good organization and a well developed capacity to critique, analyse and synthesize; an excellent grasp of the subject matter; thorough knowledge of the relevant literature;
- B 70 - 79% – *for good work*: good performance with evidence of a grasp of the subject matter; some evidence of a critical capacity and analytic ability; a reasonable understanding of the relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the relevant literature;
- C 60 - 69% – *for adequate work*: intellectually adequate performance of a student who is profiting from his or her academic experience; an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to understand the basic concepts found in the material;
- D 50 - 59% – *for marginal work*: minimally acceptable performance; some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some ability to synthesize it;
- F below 50% – *for wholly inadequate work*: a failing performance in which there is little evidence of even a superficial understanding of the subject matter; an overall weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

PARTICIPATION GRADES

A – FOR EXCELLENT WORK

Takes an active role in his or her learning, consistently demonstrating a desire to learn and to share ideas with the class. Initiates discussion and asks substantial, insightful questions. Does not dominate conversation, listens actively and respectfully to others, and makes contributions that advance the conversation. Is willing to assert a view and support it in discussion.

B – FOR GOOD WORK

Is an active learner and a regular participant in discussions. Volunteers ideas and asks fruitful questions. Is willing to engage with the ideas being discussed and to assert a view on those ideas. Listens actively and respectfully to others.

C – FOR ADEQUATE WORK

Sometimes takes an active role in learning. Contributes occasional, appropriate questions or comments. May make tangential contributions or digress from the flow of the conversation at times. Generally listens respectfully to others. Is profiting from the group learning environment, but should be more actively engaged.

D – FOR MARGINAL WORK

Seldom takes an active role in learning by joining in discussion or asking questions. Often is not engaged or listening attentively. Does not show initiative in learning. May be disruptive at times.