

## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Master of Theological Studies (MTS)	Department: Theological Studies
Master of Arts in Religious Education (MARE)	
Degree or Certificate Level: Graduate Degree	College/School: Arts & Sciences
Date (Month/Year): December 2020	Primary Assessment Contact: Rubén Rosario Rodríguez, Ph.D.
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2020	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2018	

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

**Learning Outcome #1**, focusing on the 2-semester sequence on Christian history required of all Masters students (*THEO 5270: Christian Tradition I* and *THEO 5280: Christian Tradition II*): "Graduate students will demonstrate knowledge of the broad outlines of Christian scripture, Christian history, and the major theological developments in the tradition, as well as core terms, categories, and exemplary texts that frame theological and religious studies."

### 2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

For this assessment cycle we are gathering data on a required 2-semester sequence designed to provide our graduate students with a solid foundation in the development of Western Christian thought from the apostolic era to the present: *THEO 5270: Christian Tradition I* and *THEO 5280: Christian Tradition II*.

These courses were offered on campus and face-to-face, though in Spring 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated moving all courses online (we returned to face-to-face instruction for Fall 2020 employing a hybrid flex A-B schedule; faculty had the option of teaching fully online). The Madrid campus does not have a Masters Program in Theological Studies so this report applies only to SLU's main campus.

**Direct Assessment:** (1) Coursework (Assessed by course professor through course presentations, projects, and research papers); (2) Research Paper (Assessed by the course professor employing a grading rubric developed by the DTS faculty; the Research Paper Rubric is attached to this report)

**Indirect Assessment:** (1) Annual Review (Assessed by DTS faculty as part of the annual performance evaluation of all graduate students, employing the attached Annual Review Form); Program Exit Interview (all graduating students are assessed by their faculty mentor using the attached Exit Interview Form)

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

The syllabi for the 2-course sequence on Christian Tradition were developed in consultation with DTS faculty in order to provide a consistent arc presenting the development and history of Western Christian thought. Although each individual faculty member evaluates coursework according to their own standards, these assignments are designed with the graduate program learning outcomes in mind (course syllabi for THEO 5270 and THEO 5280 attached). Aside from **coursework**, students are also evaluated using the **Research Paper Rubric** developed by DTS faculty (attached), and in consultation with all faculty, every graduate student is evaluated annually employing the **Annual Review Form** (attached) also developed by DTS faculty. Finally, graduating students also have to complete an exit interview, administered by each student's faculty mentor using an **Exit Interview Form** developed by DTS faculty (attached).

### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

**Direct Assessment:** (1) Coursework: the fact that in the last five years we have only had one student dismissed for academic reasons, and that all our MTS and MARE students graduate on-time (90% of MTS students graduate in two years, 90% of part-time MARE students graduate in four years), demonstrates that students are successfully meeting the identified learning outcomes for the Masters Program. These two courses *specifically* are required of *all* Masters students in their first year of coursework because they are foundational for the rest of the degree program. Success in later coursework attests to the solid foundation received in this first-year 2-course sequence. (2) Research Paper: most 5000-level Masters courses are designed and run as graduate seminars culminating with a semester research paper. Individual faculty members are encouraged to use the Research Paper Rubric developed in consultation with all DTS faculty; however, not many students have employed the rubric with a second reader. In other words, we are currently *not requiring* graduate faculty to employ the rubric and second reader as outlined in the 2018 assessment plan. As we revise our MTS/MARE assessment plan we need to standardize the use of the Research Paper Rubric with a second reader for all seminar courses.

**Indirect Assessment:** (1) Annual Review: all DTS faculty participate in an evaluation process of each and every graduate student every spring semester, employing the Annual Review Form developed in consultation with all DTS faculty. A key problem identified during our evaluation process in Spring 2020 is the fact that this 2-course sequence of courses is required of all Masters students, whether they are in the more research-intensive MTS track, or in the teaching-focused MARE program. As a result, some MARE students find an intensive research paper, with a focus on articulating "a research question of significance to chosen field of specialization" (from the rubric), impractical, given that most MARE students do not have an area of research specialization but are generalists seeking a foundational knowledge that will allow them to teach a breadth of theology courses at the secondary school level. (2) Exit Interview: Recent exit interviews confirm student satisfaction with the required foundational coursework, especially since there are always a number of students applying to the program who do not have undergraduate coursework in religion and/or theology. However, MARE students have complained that the 15 CR of required coursework for the joint degree program with the School of Education leaves no room for electives in Theology. The superintendent of Catholic secondary schools for the Archdiocese of St. Louis has lodged a similar complaint, preferring that secondary school teachers (many of whom already have a BA in Education) have more coursework in Theological Studies.

## 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The annual review process, exit interviews, and feedback from the faculty members teaching THEO 5270 and THEO 5280, has allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of this 2-course sequence. The most quantifiable measure of success is the fact that we have seen improved performance in upper-level coursework after students have completed this foundational 2-course sequence. This conclusion is affirmed by comments from graduating students in their exit interviews. The complaint that MARE students do not have the possibility for more coursework in Theological Studies, coupled with the same complaint by the Archdiocesan representative, will likely lead to a redesign of the MARE Program, and maybe even a dissolution of the joint-degree with the School of Education.

## 6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

These issues are discussed every spring when we undertake the departmental evaluation of all graduate students, as well as part of the report form the Masters Program coordinator at our annual faculty retreat every August.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course content</li><li>• Teaching techniques</li><li>• Improvements in technology</li><li>• Prerequisites</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course sequence</li><li>• New courses</li><li>• Deletion of courses</li><li>• Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings</li></ul> |
| Changes to the Assessment Plan          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student learning outcomes</li><li>• Artifacts of student learning</li><li>• Evaluation process</li></ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)</li><li>• Data collection methods</li><li>• Frequency of data collection</li></ul>                            |

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Some MARE students find an intensive research paper impractical, given that most MARE students are generalists seeking a foundational knowledge that will allow them to teach a breadth of theology courses at the secondary school level. Consequently, the department Chair, Graduate Studies coordinator, and Masters Program coordinator have asked faculty teaching at the 5000-level to offer students in the MARE program an alternative assignment to the semester research paper, one more in line with their vocational goals. For example, an MARE student could prepare a course syllabus with accompanying curriculum materials for an introductory course in Christian history at the high school level in lieu of a semester research paper. DTS faculty is very supportive of our MARE students and has adapted their syllabi accordingly.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

## 7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Before 2017, students were required to take one course in Christian history. As a result of (1) student exit interviews, (2) consultation with the archdiocese concerning their accreditation standards for teachers of Theology at the high school level, and (3) comparison of our Masters Program with peer and aspirational schools, we implemented this 2-course sequence that covers the arc of Western Christian history from the apostolic era to the present, and require it of all graduate students in their first year of coursework.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

Again, through the annual review process, exit interviews, and in dialogue with the faculty members teaching THEO 5270 and THEO 5280, we have evaluated the effectiveness of this 2-course sequence. The most quantifiable measure of success is the fact that we have seen improved performance in upper-level coursework once students have completed this foundational 2-course sequence. This conclusion is affirmed by comments from graduating students in their exit interviews.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Another indicator of success is the fact that in the last four years (since the 2-course sequence was implemented) all our graduates have gone into full-time employment as religious educators or been accepted into top doctoral programs. Our MARE graduates are employed in local and regional Catholic schools and our MTS graduates have been placed in doctoral programs (including SLU's Ph.D. program as well as programs at the University of Notre Dame, Boston College, Fordham University, Baylor University, Marquette University, University of Virginia, Boston University, and Southern Methodist University).

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We plan to continue to assess our Masters Programs on a regular basis in order to remain competitive and to ensure that we are preparing our graduates for the job market. Our next step is to evaluate the other foundational 2-course sequence *required of all* Masters students in their first year of coursework (*THEO 5000: Old Testament* and *THEO 5010: New Testament*).

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.**



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Department of Theological Studies

## MASTERS' STUDENT ANNUAL REVIEW FORM

*Students: Please complete electronically, sign, and submit hard copy to the Director of Graduate Studies by **March 15***

### STUDENT INFORMATION

Date of Evaluation: _____	Phone: _____
Name: _____	Banner ID: _____
Email: _____	Mentor: _____
Graduate Program: _____	
Area of Specialization: _____	

Are you on Academic Leave?       Yes       No

If Yes, please attach a copy of your Leave Agreement to this review.

### ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

Previous courses: List chronologically all previous courses you have taken since enrolling at SLU, including the grades you received. Lines can be added to the table as you progress. You can find this information using Banner.

Term	Course #	Course Title	Credits	Grade

Current courses: Which courses are you taking now? Lines can be added to the table as you progress.

Course #	Course Title	Credits

### **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

If applicable, list any language competency exams you have taken, the dates of those exams, and their results. Provide an expected timeline for the fulfillment of all language requirements (indicating in which languages you intend to demonstrate competency, how you intend to acquire competency, and when you plan to take the competency exams).

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### **THESIS RESEARCH**

If applicable, describe your current progress with the research requirements of the program (i.e., thesis, dissertation). Provide expected timelines, with dates, for completion of the major components of your thesis or dissertation (i.e., prospectus defense, written drafts of individual chapters, final written version, committee approval, oral defense).

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### **ASSISTANTSHIP ACTIVITIES**

Support: Have you received financial support from either SLU or external organizations? If so, what is the source (teaching assistantship or research assistantship from department, presidential scholarship, external fellowship, etc.)? Indicate whether your source of support included a stipend and the duration of the support contract. If none, leave blank.

Term	Source and Type of Support

Teaching: In which courses and semesters have you been a Teaching Assistant? In which courses and semesters have you been the Primary Instructor? If none, leave blank.

Term	Course #	Course Title	Role

Research: With which faculty and in which semesters have you been a Research Assistant? If none, leave blank.

Term	Faculty Member	Main Activities

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

List below all presentations at professional meetings and conferences for the current academic year. Include any presentations to occur over the rest of the academic year, including summer.

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List below all articles or manuscripts submitted for publication this academic year, indicating the journal to which they were submitted and the results of editorial reviews.

--

List below all internal or external grant submissions (or your participation in submissions) this academic year, indicating the funding source to which they were submitted and the results of the reviews, if known.

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Describe any specialized training in teaching. Have you completed or do you plan on completing the Certificate Program in Teaching from the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning?

List below all internships that you have had this academic year, indicating the place, time commitment, and activities of the program.

List all professional organizations of which you are a student member, including any offices held.

Describe any professional service and/or leadership positions associated with the university, graduate education, department or program. Indicate your title and dates of service.

List any awards, honors and achievements you have received this academic year.

Are there any other factors that you would like to have included in your evaluation?

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**EVALUATION: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE FACULTY**

Based upon the faculty's discussion, the quality of your work was rated in each of the following areas.

	<b>Not Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Meeting Expectations</b>
<b>Academic Quality of Coursework</b>		
<b>Language Acquisition (if applicable)</b>		
<b>Assistantship Quality and Quantity (if applicable)</b>		
<b>Collegiality</b>		

Commentary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Graduate Studies' signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## EXIT INTERVIEW: GRADUATE STUDENTS

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Track: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you rate your overall experience at SLU in terms of theological education?
  
2. Please comment on the interaction with faculty and the quality of instruction and mentoring you received as a graduate student.
  
3. Which courses were most valuable for you? Which were least? Were there any courses you wished could have been available? Did you have enough flexibility to take the courses that were of interest to you?
  
4. For MA students: did the program enable you to develop a general theological literacy by providing you with a basic background in the main areas of Catholic theology?  
  
For PhD students: did the program train you to research and teach at a high level?
  
5. Did you find the DTS to be a supportive community, both socially and spiritually?
  
6. Please comment on the structure and operation of the program. What worked well? What could be improved?
  
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add about the structure of our programs, student satisfaction or ideas for improvement?

8. What are your plans for after graduation?

9. Please provide your post-graduation contact information:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (non-SLU): \_\_\_\_\_

## Research Paper Rubric

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Reader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Learning Goals**

- Students will formulate a research question of significance to their chosen field of specialization.
- Students will articulate a clear and concise thesis statement that responds directly to the question posed and drives the structure of the proposed thesis.
- Students will demonstrate familiarity with primary sources and existing scholarship on point.
- Students will articulate a research method appropriate to the question posed.

**II. Instructions**

- Read the paper.
- Using the rubric key, evaluate the paper and provide a total score.

**Rubric Key**

- 5 = Outstanding
- 4 = Very Good
- 3 = Acceptable
- 2 = Needs Work
- 1 = Unacceptable

**III. Rubric Indicator**

Articulates a research question of significance to chosen field of specialization	
Articulates a clear, concise, and direct thesis that drives the structure of the proposed paper	
Substantiates argument with recourse to relevant primary sources	
Situates argument within context of and critically assesses existing scholarship on the question	
Employs a research method appropriate to the question posed	
Logically and coherently structures the argument in defense of the thesis	
Employs correct English grammar and syntax	
Includes properly-formatted Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography	
Total Score	

**IV. Evaluation Score (Please List Number Score) \_\_\_\_\_**

**V. Evaluation Possibilities for the paper**

- Pass (a score of 24 or above)
- Fail (a score of 23 or below, with option for one retake)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Signature

## Theo 5270: Christian Tradition I

Tuesdays, 9am-11:30

McGannon Hall 262

Zoom Personal Meeting Room: <https://slu.zoom.us/j/5412139870>

Fall 2020

Instructor: Peter W. Martens  
Email: [peter.martens@slu.edu](mailto:peter.martens@slu.edu)

### 1. Description

Each of our meetings this semester will consist of two parts. In the first, we will survey an important aspect of early and medieval Christianity. In the second, we will examine some aspect of the field – its sources, how they are archived, its methods, both old and new, and reference works.

### 2. Requirements

1. Preparation and Participation: students are expected to have read all assigned materials and come prepared to contribute to the seminar's discussion. **20% of final grade.**
2. Leading: each student will lead two (2) meetings. This will involve identifying and communicating one week in advance which handful of primary texts that you think your classmates should be reading ("Readings A" below). There are many source books available to you: for early Christianity, Ehrman, *After the New Testament* and Ehrman and Jacobs, *Christianity in Late Antiquity* are excellent resources; for medieval Christianity, Rubin, *Medieval Christianity in Practice* and Fordham's *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* are good guides. Keep in mind that we will discuss these readings for *half* of each class period. When we meet, in addition to supplying contextual information for the readings (who, where, when) the leader should highlight key themes, issues, or problems with the assigned texts that demonstrate a close reading of the sources. Please keep in mind that the goal of each session is to facilitate a discussion with classmates – not lecture at them. For the second half of each class period, the leader will guide the class through the assigned texts already identified below. **20% of final grade.**
3. Projects: students will complete a number of short projects within the course's second part. They are listed below in the schedule. These are due on the day they are assigned. **20% of final grade.**
4. Assigned text: students will read Robert Wilken's *The First Thousand Years*, to learn one way of telling the story of the Christian tradition. **10% of final grade.**
5. Final Exam: **30%**

A standard grading scale (A, A-, B+ and so on) applies. Half-grade deductions for late submissions.

### **3. Required Texts**

Robert Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: a Global History of Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

### **4. Learning Outcomes**

Key learning outcomes include the ability to:

- identify key sources in our field;
- demonstrate basic historical skills in analyzing them;
- facilitate conversations around these sources that yield new insights;
- articulate historiographical features of our field.

### **5. Attendance**

The expectation is that students attend every session. More than one absence results in a half letter grade deduction from the final grade.

In addition, the University has adopted a new policy on attendance regarding COVID (it can be found here: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/index.php>).

### **6. Other Matters**

I adopt university policy on academic honesty, disability accommodations, Title IX, and Face Masks (these statements are found here: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/index.php>)

### **7. Schedule**

WEEK 1 (August 18): *Introduction*

WEEK 2 (August 25): Heresy and Orthodoxy [Leader: Peter Martens]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: What counts as “Christianity” (1)? Stephen Prothero, *Religion Matters*, chapter 1.

WEEK 3 (September 1): Martyrdom [Leader: Danny]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: What counts as “Christianity” (2)? Stausberg & Gardiner, “Definition,” *Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, chapter 1.

WEEK 4 (September 8): Monasticism [Leader: Danny]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: **Assignment:** on the basis of Wilken’s *The First Thousand Years* (the introduction, but also other sections as you see fit), identify what counts as “Christianity” for him. Is he working with any of the definitions of religion we have examined this semester, and if so, which ones? Has he discussed this issue carefully enough? What features does he not examine, or under-examine, what features does he highlight, and perhaps over-highlight? 5 pages (typed, double-spaced).

WEEK 5 (September 15): Councils and Creeds [Leader: Mark]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: Who counts as a “Christian”? Chs. 7-8 from Donnelly & Norton, *Doing History*.

WEEK 6 (September 22): Rituals [Leader: Elyse]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: **Assignment:** using an array of church history textbooks, identify as many new voices and perspectives as you can that have emerged in the writing about this topic. 2 pages (typed, double-spaced).

WEEK 7 (September 29): Imperial House [Leader: Elyse]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: What is a “Tradition”? Olav Hammer, “Tradition and Innovation,” *Oxford Handbook Study of Religion*.

WEEK 8 (October 6): Bible [Leader: Mark]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: What kinds of ancient and medieval sources are available to students of Christianity? Use any combination of research guides, dictionaries, handbooks, to create a list.

WEEK 9 (October 13): Women's Lives [Leader: Sarah]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: **Assignment:** How to find an early or medieval Christian treatise. Pick a treatise that is of interest to you. Using one of the relevant *Claves* listed here (<https://www.corpuschristianorum.org/studies-reference-works>), track the *Clavis* down in the library and identify the relevant “*Clavis* number” of that treatise, the critical edition of the treatise that the *Clavis* lists, and a recent translation of it.

WEEK 10 (October 20): Christians outside the Empire [Leader: Jaron]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: In the library, locate the key series of critical editions for Latin, Greek, and “Oriental” patristics sources. See *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 963-964. *In the library*, find the key English, French, German, and Italian translations of key patristics sources (*OHECS*, 969-969).

WEEK 11 (October 27): Pilgrims, Relics, and Holy Places [Leader: Ben]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: In the library, locate the key series of critical editions for medieval Greek (“Byzantine”), medieval Latin, and medieval Arabic sources.

WEEK 12 (November 3): Saints' Lives [Leader: Sarah]

Reading A: TBD

Reading B: **Assignment:** How Treatises are Archived (1). Identify a number of organizational schemas that scholars use to catalogue patristic treatises in a number of major patrologies, handbooks, overviews of sources. *OHECS*, 964-965. Tip: are treatises listed alphabetically? If not (they are not), then how are they presented to readers? Compare modern classifications with Jerome's schema in *On Illustrious Men*. 2 pages (typed, double-spaced).

WEEK 13 (November 10): Art and Architecture [Leader: Jaron]

Reading A: TBD.

Reading B: How Treatises are Archived (2): Ellen Muehlberger, "On Authors, Fathers, and Holy Men," *Marginalia* (<https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/on-authors-fathers-and-holy-men-by-ellen-muehlberger/>). How does Muehlberger challenge us to re-think our archive?

WEEK 14 (November 17): Scholastic Theology [Leader: Ben]

Reading A: TBD.

Reading B: **Assignment:** pick any treatise that interests you. Propose 5 different "folders" in which it could be archived. As you do this, write up a short statement about what is at stake when we create an archive. How are archives not neutral? 3 pages (typed, double-spaced).

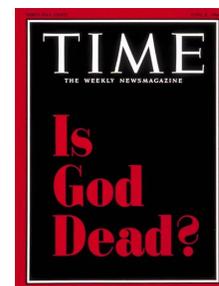
WEEK 15 (November 24): *Summary*

We will conclude the course with a roundtable discussion about what we have learned this semester – how this course has changed us in some way – and what we hope to learn in future studies.

**Final Exam (Date TBD).** Identify a feature of Christianity that is of interest to you. It can be a teaching, a ritual, a practice, an architectural style, an item of clothing – anything associated with Christianity. Using Olav Hammer's essay (week 7), demonstrate how both tradition and innovation are interwoven into the feature you have chosen. 10 pages (typed, double-spaced).



**THEO 4930-03/THEO 5280-01**  
**Christian Tradition II**  
**Global Christianity from 1500 – Present**  
 3 credit hours  
 Spring 2019



*“Now, nowhere but in God can one find eternal and immortal life. Hence the chief concern and care of our life ought to be to seek God, to aspire to him with our whole heart, and to rest nowhere else but in him.”*

—John Calvin, 1538 *Catechism*

Professor: Rubén Rosario Rodríguez, Ph.D.

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Telephone: 314-977-2855

Office: Adorjan #240

Class Time: Tues., 9:00-11:30 AM

Classroom: Adorjan Hall 245C

Office Hours: Wednesdays

9:00 AM-11:00 AM

(or by appointment)

## Course Description

This 4000/5000-level course offers a broad survey of the figures, movements and theological themes in the development of global Christianity from the time of the Renaissance and Reformation through to the present within their broader historical, cultural, political, and intellectual contexts. Students will examine the development of major Christian Traditions (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox) through close study of key primary texts and related secondary materials, while also gaining an understanding of just how diverse the Christian tradition has become in light of the transcultural interactions brought about by its missionary expansion. Readings will address certain themes distinct to the Modern era of Christianity: the rise of nationalism and church/state relations; questions of slavery, racism, and human trafficking; the changing role of women in the church; the theological foundations of Christian social thought; the rise of secularism and scientific rationalism; the relationship of Christianity to other religions.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will have gained:

- A solid grounding in the history of Christianity from 1500 to the present
- Increased exposure to, and improved ability to critically read and evaluate, primary source documents relating to the development of Christian thought in the modern period
- An appreciation for the cultural and theological diversity within global Christianity
- Familiarity with certain key theological terms and hermeneutical tools for understanding the development of modern Christianity
- Ability to write a concise and cogent academic book review
- Ability to effectively deliver an oral presentation on original research

- Ability to write a research paper in which students will: (a) articulate and argue a thesis about a theological topic of contemporary relevance, (b) develop a reasoned assessment of contemporary views on the topic, and (c) develop an original position on the topic.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Final grades will be determined by the quality of the work submitted and the student's participation in the class on the following basis:

1. *20% Class Participation*—attendance, active participation, and positive contribution to class discussions are a required part of your grade based on your ability to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the primary readings assigned every week by means of substantive contributions to the class discussion, or by answering direct questions about the readings posed by the instructor.
2. *15% Moderate Class Discussion*—each student will have at least one opportunity to present and one opportunity to respond to the presenter, for a total of two dates moderating discussion (see **Appendix A** to sign up for dates to serve as both discussant and respondent; see **Appendix B** for guidelines on civil classroom conduct).
3. *10% Research Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography*—students will submit a 1-page thesis proposal with an annotated bibliography of 10 primary and secondary sources relevant to their research topics. Final topic approval from the instructor is required. **Due in class on February 18, 2020.**
4. *15% Scholarly Book Review*—each student will choose one of the secondary texts cited in their annotated bibliography and write a 700-1000-word book review. See **Appendix C** for guidelines on how to write an academic book review. The book review should be written as if it were being submitted to an academic journal, so students should familiarize themselves with major journals in the field to get a sense of format and style. **Due in class on March 3, 2020.**
5. *15% Research Paper First Draft*—students will be expected to submit a first draft (in whatever state of completion) of their research paper to the instructor and to an editing partner selected from among your classmates. You will serve as each other's editing partners, providing feedback on the draft, and also presenting your partner's research in a brief 5-minute presentation to the rest of the class beginning the week following this due date until the end of the semester. **Due in class on April 14, 2020.**
6. *25% Research Paper*—students will produce a major theological research paper (15 pages at 4000-level/25 pages at 5000-level) on a topic of their choice (pending approval by the instructor) relevant to the period covered in this course (1500 to the present). Students will be evaluated on their ability to: (a) articulate and argue a thesis about a theological topic of relevance in Modern Christianity, (b) develop a reasoned assessment of contemporary views on the topic, and (c) develop an original position on the topic. See

**Appendix D** for general guidelines for writing a research paper; a more detailed grading rubric for this research paper will be distributed later in the semester. **Due Thursday, May 7, 2020 by 4:00 PM.**

## Grading Scale

<b>A</b>	100-94	<b>A-</b>	93-90	<b>B+</b>	89-87	
<b>B</b>	86-84	<b>B-</b>	83-80	<b>C+</b>	79-77	
<b>C</b>	76-74	<b>C-</b>	73-70	<b>D</b>	69-60	<b>F</b> 59-0

## Course Materials

### *Required Texts*

Dennis Janz (editor), *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions* **ISBN-13: 978-0800663100**

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (Penguin Classics, 1999) **ISBN-13: 978-0140445626**

René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett, 1999) **ISBN-13: 978-0872204201**

Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Pearson, 1994) **ISBN-13: 978-0023193309**

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Vintage Books, 1989) **ISBN-13: 978-0679724629**

John D. Zizoulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (T&T Clark, 2008) **ISBN-13: 978-0567033154**

David F. Ford and Mike Higton, eds., *The Modern Theologians Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) **ISBN-978-1405171106**

Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Beacon Press, 1986) **ISBN-13: 978-0807011010**

Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (Orbis Books, 1988) **ISBN-13: 978-0883445426**

James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis Books, 1997) **ISBN-13: 978-1570751585**

### *Recommended Texts*

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (Penguin Books, 2011) **ISBN-13: 978-0143118695**

Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity* (Penguin Books, 2015) ISBN-13: 978-0140146561

Gerald O'Collins, S.J., *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (Michael Glazier, 2014) ISBN-13: 978-0814683118

*“The Bible is a document both of the divine self-manifestation and of the way in which human beings have received it.”*

—Paul Tillich

## Course Outline

**JAN 14**

### **Setting the Stage: Late Medieval Christianity**

#### *Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*: Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 4-13; Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, 13-14; Leo X, *Pastor Aeternus*, 14; Dietrich Kolde, *Mirror for Christians*, 59-63

#### *Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 551-603

Discussion Questions: (1) How would you characterize these medieval theological texts? In other words, what identifies them as pre-modern as opposed to modern? (2) Based on these readings, what issues do you think gave rise to the 16<sup>th</sup> century reformations?

**JAN 20**

**Martin Luther King Day** (university holiday)

**JAN 21**

### **The Challenge of Humanism**

#### *Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*: Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, *Introduction to the Commentary on the Psalms*, 32-34; Desiderius Erasmus, *The Abbot and the Learned Lady*, 28-32, *In Praise of Folly*, 63-74

Erasmus, *The Manual of a Christian Knight*, chaps. vi-viii

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/erasmus-the-manual-of-a-christian-knight>

#### *Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 551-603

Discussion Questions: (1) Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ignatius of Loyola, to name a few, were all educated in and highly influenced by Renaissance humanism. How does humanism differ from the medieval worldview? (2) What impact do you see humanism having on the Reformation?

**JAN 28**

### **Luther's Reforms: Wittenberg and Beyond**

*Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*: Martin Luther, 75-162

*Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 604-654

Discussion Questions: (1) Has your view of the issues that gave rise to the Reformation been changed by the readings? (2) In your opinion, was Luther a sincere reformer, or did he seek schism with Rome from the outset? (3) What is the spiritual insight of Luther's emphasis on "justification by faith"? Is this a *new* idea in Christianity?

**FEB 4**

### **John Calvin: Social Reformer**

*Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*: John Calvin, 245-328.

*Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 604-654

Discussion Questions: (1) What (if any) major doctrinal points distinguish Calvin from Luther? (2) What part does the doctrine of predestination play in Calvin's theology? (3) Can we still see the Calvinist influence in North American culture? If so, identify some examples.

**FEB 11**

### **The Catholic Reformation**

*Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*, "Early Reactions," "The Council of Trent," "The Jesuits," and "A Mystical Voice," 377-433, 436-441

*Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 655-688

Discussion Questions: (1) Why do you think historians have moved away from the term “Counterreformation” when speaking about the Catholic Reformation? (2) What points of contact do you see between Luther’s “95 Theses” and the Council of Trent? (3) Agree or disagree: the Jesuit order sought to “secularize” the church?

**FEB 18**

### **Christianity in the New World**

*Primary Readings*

From *A Reformation Reader*, “The New World,” 434-435;  
Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*

*Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 689-715

Discussion Questions: (1) Based on our readings, did the Spanish come to “save” or “enslave” the indigenous population? (2) What is the gist of the argument put forth by Sepúlveda justifying the conquest and enslavement? (3) How did Las Casas refute Sepúlveda?

***Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due***

**FEB 25**

### **The Age of “Enlightenment”**

*Primary Readings*

Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*

*Recommended Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 769-816

Discussion Questions: (1) Why is Descartes called the “father of modern philosophy”? In other words, what major shift did he facilitate between the pre-modern and modern ways of thinking? (2) Descartes was a committed Catholic (Jesuit educated), who put forth a proof for the existence of God, yet was highly critical of the church’s authoritarian power. Are these reconcilable positions? (3) What are the three basic ontological realities Descartes affirms via his philosophical method?

**MAR 2-7**

### **MID-TERM EXAMS**

**MAR 3**

### **What is Enlightenment?**

*Primary Readings*Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics**Recommended Readings*MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 769-816

Discussion Questions: (1) Kant is attributed with ushering in the modern “turn to the subject”—what does this mean? (2) Why is Kant considered an idealist? How does that differ from an empiricist? (3) What is an antinomy? How does Kant propose resolving these paradoxical conundrums?

*Book review assignment due***MAR 9-14****SPRING BREAK**

“We cannot turn away from other churches without shutting ourselves off from Christ and from our own future in his body. Thus every event of ecumenism, like every Eucharist, is an event of judgment and repentance, and of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which we are joined to those we have shunned.”

—Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon

**MAR 17****The Hermeneutics of Suspicion***Primary Readings*Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals**Secondary Readings*MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 817-865

Discussion Questions: (1) Nietzsche develops one of the harshest criticisms of Christianity with his analysis of “slave” morality. What is his critique of modern ethical systems? (2) What do you think Nietzsche meant by his famous quote, “God is dead...And we have killed him”? (3) What is the value of Nietzsche’s genealogical approach?

**MAR 24****Eastern Christianity in the Modern Era***Primary Readings*

Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*; from *The Modern Theologians Reader*: Sergii Bulgakov, “The Unfading Light”, 348-350; Georges Florovsky, “The Catholicity of the Church,” 351-356.

*Secondary Readings*

Ware, *The Orthodox Church*; MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 466-550

Discussion Questions: (1) In what ways has Eastern Orthodox Christianity avoided Modernism? In what ways has it changed with the times? (2) Despite a commitment to ecumenism, why do many Eastern Orthodox theologians and believers consider Protestants “Crypto-Papists”? (3) Zizioulas argues that Orthodoxy could eventually come to embrace the *Filioque* (if understood the right way). Why was the *Filioque* controversy the cause of the Great Schism of 1054?

**MAR 31**

### **The Theology of Crisis**

#### *Primary Readings*

From *The Modern Theologians Reader*: Karl Barth, “The Theme of the Epistle to the Romans,” “Jesus Christ, Electing and Elected,” 7-18; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Ultimate and Penultimate Things,” *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 19-29; Paul Tillich, “The Actuality of God,” “The Meaning of Salvation,” 30-40; H. R. Niebuhr, “Christ the Transformer of Culture,” 115-118; Reinhold Niebuhr, “The Conflict Between Individual and Social Morality,” 119-123.

#### *Secondary Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 915-966

Discussion Questions: (1) What was the “crisis” that gave rise to Barth’s break with Protestant Liberalism? (2) While differing in style and approach, what unites these various Protestant thinkers? (3) Why did they all come to reject the label Neo-Orthodox?

**APR 7**

### **Catholic Ressourcement**

#### *Primary Readings*

From *The Modern Theologians Reader*: Henri de Lubac, “Divine Exigence and Natural Desire,” “Allegory, Sense of the Faith,” 41-53; Karl Rahner, “God of My Life,” “What Does It Mean to Say: ‘God Became Man’?”, 54-63; Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Christ’s Mission and Person,” “Dramatic Soteriology,” 64-72.

#### *Secondary Readings*

O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council*; MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 915-966

Discussion Questions: (1) What was the dissatisfaction with Vatican I 19<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Scholasticism that prompted the

*Nouvelle Theologie* and *Ressourcement* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? (2) What is the understanding of doctrine and tradition championed by these Catholic theologians? (3) Do we need to reconcile the primacy of Christ in God's self-revelation with the universality of grace as manifest in other religions (Rahner)?

***Research Paper First Draft due***

**APR 9-13**

**EASTER BREAK**

**APR 14**

**The Church After Vatican II**

*Primary Readings*

Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*; Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Hominis* in *The Modern Theologians Reader*, 161-166.

*Secondary Readings*

O'Collins, *The Second Vatican Council*; MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 967-1016

Discussion Questions: (1) What is the nature of Daly's dissatisfaction with Vatican II theology? Is she optimistic about the future of women in the church? (2) What do you imagine is Daly's opinion of Pope John Paul II's encyclical? (3) Has the role of women in the church changed significantly since Vatican II?

***Peer Editing Presentations***

**APR 21**

**The Rise of Contextual Theologies**

*Primary Readings*

Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*; from *The Modern Theologians Reader*: Latin American Council of Bishops, "Justice at Medellín," 284-288.

*Secondary Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 967-1016

Discussion Questions: (1) What is Gutiérrez's opinion of *Nouvelle Theologie* and *Ressourcement*? (2) Is there a major difference between "liberation" and "salvation"? If so, why do you think Gutiérrez favors the term liberation? (3) What is God's "preferential option for the poor"?

**APR 28**

**Political Theology**

*Primary Readings*

Cone, *God of the Oppressed*; from *The Modern Theologians Reader*: Gayraud S. Wilmore, "The Religion of the Slave," 273-278; Delores S. Williams, "Hagar's Story," 279-283.

*Secondary Readings*

MacCulloch, *Christianity*, 866-914

Discussion Questions: (1) What does it mean to consider the "black experience" as a source for theology? (2) What does it mean to affirm, "Jesus is Black"? (3) Theology is inherently political. Cone writes: "the oppressor cannot decide what is Christian behavior." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

**MAY 4 (Monday)**

**Spring Classes End**

**MAY 7**

**FINAL PAPERS DUE!**

*"The dynamism and vitality expressed by 'spirit' are accentuated when the human person is considered from the standpoint of God's action on it. Spirit and its derivatives signify a life that is in accordance with God's will—that is, a life in accordance with the gift of divine filiation that finds expression in human fellowship."*

—Gustavo Gutiérrez

**THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SYLLABUS AT ANY TIME FOR THE PURPOSES OF MEETING COURSE LEARNING GOALS**



## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its

mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

[https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy\\_academic-integrity\\_6-26-2015.pdf](https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf).

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

## **Title IX Syllabus Statement**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [anna.kratky@slu.edu](mailto:anna.kratky@slu.edu); 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the [Office of the General Counsel](#).

## **Student Success Center**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the [Student Success Center](#) to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

## **Disability Services & Academic Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once

successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

## University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the [Student Success Center](#) or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

## Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office ([deanofstudents@slu.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@slu.edu) or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.



**APPENDIX A**  
**Schedule of Class Discussants & Respondents**  
Spring 2019

<b>JAN 21</b>	<b>The Challenge of Humanism</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>JAN 28</b>	<b>Luther's Reforms: Wittenberg and Beyond</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>FEB 4</b>	<b>John Calvin: Second-Generation Reformer</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>FEB 11</b>	<b>The Catholic Reformation</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>FEB 18</b>	<b>Christianity in the New World</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>FEB 25</b>	<b>The Age of "Enlightenment"</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____
<b>MAR 3</b>	<b>What is Enlightenment?</b> <i>Discussant:</i> _____ <i>Respondent:</i> _____

**MAR 17                    The Hermeneutics of Suspicion**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**MAR 24                    Eastern Christianity in the Modern Era**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**MAR 31                    The Theology of Crisis**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**APR 7                      Catholic Ressourcement**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**APR 14                    The Church After Vatican II**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**APR 21                    The Rise of Contextual Theologies**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

**APR 28                    Political Theologies**

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Respondent:* \_\_\_\_\_

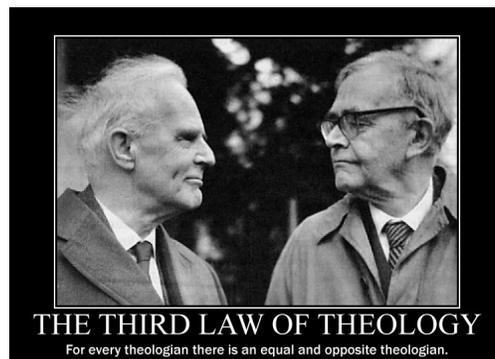
## APPENDIX B

### Guidelines for Class Discussion

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner. Classroom discussions will from time to time involve disagreements and differences of perspective. This is perfectly legitimate and part of the learning process. Such discussions must respect the dignity of all participants, regardless of differing viewpoints. The classroom should be an environment in which students have the liberty to test out ideas, even if they are not yet fully formulated, without fear of ridicule or reproach.

Christian theology is an ongoing conversation about how God has been understood by the Christian tradition throughout the ages. The point of conversation (theological or otherwise) is to advance understanding for all participants, therefore it is important to enter into conversation seeking to learn as much as to persuade. In that spirit, the following guidelines are offered to make our time together more mutually beneficial:

1. This is not debate class! We are here to *discuss* theology by participating in the type of conversation that genuinely advances understanding. It is important to approach these discussions with both a high degree of introspection and a willingness to engage in dialogue.
2. Engage in academically responsible scholarship by presenting all perspectives fairly, by making an effort to understand an author's historical and cultural context, and by consulting primary sources directly (always citing references fully).
3. Before discussing differences of opinion, it is always helpful to begin by identifying some common convictions about the issue at hand.
4. Be open to constructive criticism since much can be learned from objections to one's own position, even if in the end one's position remains unchanged.
5. Point out mistakes or misinformation in your interlocutor's position gently and constructively.
6. At the conclusion of the conversation assess what you have learned or need to learn in order to further refine your own position.



## APPENDIX C

### Guidelines for Writing a Scholarly Book Review

Book reviews are an important tool in academic research. Scholars at every stage of their professional development ought to write book reviews, as it is one of the most direct ways to disseminate information about new publications and advances in one's discipline. Graduate students in particular benefit from writing and publishing academic book reviews because it is one avenue for academic publishing while still a student, it also allows you to build your personal library, and creates relationships with colleagues (editors) in the profession.

There are two major ways journal editors solicit book reviewers: (1) the journal publishes (often on its website) a list of books received from major academic presses and asks potential reviewers to request a review copy, and (2) or the book review editor proactively contacts potential reviewers directly (often at academic conferences). Nevertheless, if there is a book you are interested in reviewing, there is no harm in contacting the book review editor at the particular journal directly and requesting to review a particular book. Regardless, as a graduate student it is good to develop relationships with book review editors at several major journals in your field so that your name is on the list of potential reviewers.

Every journal publishes its own guidelines for book reviews, typically anywhere from 750 to 1000 words; longer review essays run 1500 to 3000 words. It is best to go to the particular journal's website and read their submission and style guidelines directly. Here are some examples:

*The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*  
<https://scethics.org/books-needing-reviews>

*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*  
[https://academic.oup.com/jaar/pages/Books\\_for\\_Review](https://academic.oup.com/jaar/pages/Books_for_Review)

*The Journal of Theological Studies*  
<http://theologicalstudies.net>

#### **General Guidelines for writing an academic book review:**

- *Summary of argument.* Your review should, as concisely as possible, summarize the book's argument. Even edited collections and textbooks will have particular features intended to make them distinctive in the proverbial marketplace of ideas. What, ultimately, is this book's *raison d'être*? If there is an identifiable thesis statement, you may consider quoting it directly.
- *About the author(s).* Some basic biographical information about the author(s) or editor(s) of the book you are reviewing is necessary. Who are they? What are they known for? What particular sorts of qualifications and expertise do they bring to the subject? How might the work you are reviewing fit into a wider research or career trajectory?

- *Summary of contents.* A reasonably thorough indication of the research methods used (if applicable) and of the range of substantive material covered in the book should be included.
- *Strength.* Identify one particular area in which you think the book does well. This should, ideally, be its single greatest strength as an academic work.
- *Weakness.* Identify one particular area in which you think the book could be improved. While this weakness might be related to something you actually believe to be incorrect, it is more likely to be something that the author omitted, or neglected to address in sufficient detail.
- *Conclusion.* End your review with a concluding statement summarizing your opinion of the book. You should also explicitly identify a range of audiences whom you think would appreciate reading or otherwise benefit from the book.

Writing good, concise book reviews is an important skill for any future academic to develop, and the more you do it, the better you get at it. Provided you meet your deadlines and are amenable to any changes your editor may wish you to implement, your opportunities to make contributions in this genre and to the collective pursuits of a scholarly community committed to the advancement of knowledge will only increase with time.

**APPENDIX D**  
**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF RESEARCH PAPER**

- 1) The final semester paper shall be 25 pages (15 pages at the 4000-level) in length, double-spaced, 12 pt font with 1-inch margins, and will be due on the date set by the Registrar for the final exam in this course (**Thursday, May 7, 2020**).
- 2) The paper must be properly formatted, correctly annotated, and have a bibliography attached following the conventions of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- 3) Choose a carefully defined topic that will enable you to treat the subject in a substantial way within the prescribed limits. **Please secure the instructor's approval of the topic prior by submitting your Research Topic Proposal in class on February 18, 2019.**
- 4) Focus on primary readings, but feel free to make judicious use of secondary literature. However, you are being graded on your ability to read and analyze primary theological texts, not your ability to survey and cite current scholarship.
- 5) It is advisable to narrow your research paper to one of the two theologians. Having defined your topic, present the author's position, engage in critical conversation with the author, and indicate the significance of your study for the contemporary church.
- 6) A RESEARCH paper carefully presents someone else's ideas by drawing upon other sources for clarification and verification in order to provide a defensible thesis/opinion about someone else's beliefs, theories, or suppositions.

In *analyzing* a theological text:

1. Assess the thesis: Does it adequately address the stated problem? What theological assumptions does the author make?
2. Assess the argument: Does the author's argument support the thesis? To what tradition or community is the author accountable? Has the author made good use of theological resources? Has the author presented opposing opinions fairly and accurately?
3. Respond to the argument: What is your opinion of the argument?

In *writing* a theological paper, demonstrate your ability to critically analyze a text in one of the following ways:

1. *Agreement*—this type of essay affirms the author's conclusions on a reasoned basis other than the author's own argument; that is, demonstrate why you agree with the author by developing your own argument in defense of the author's thesis or by appealing to other authorities who hold similar positions.
2. *Disagreement*—this type of essay rejects all or part of the author's argument on the basis of a reasoned argument of your own devising by stating and defending your reasons for disagreement.

3. *Consequence*—this type of essay makes explicit unstated but important consequences of the author’s argument that are either incoherent or inconsistent with the author’s position.
4. *Presupposition*—this style of essay makes explicit unstated but important presuppositions of the author’s argument that would have to be true in order for the author’s argument to be valid but which the author has left unstated.
5. *Comparison*—this type of essay draws relevant and interesting conclusions from a comparison and contrast of two (or more) different reading assignments.
6. *Synthesis*—this kind of essay creatively combines various arguments of various authors in order to construct a new argument.

**Students needing further instruction on writing papers are encouraged to call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.**

