

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Master of Arts in Religious Education; Master of Theological Studies

Department: Theological Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: Post-Baccalaureate Graduate Degree

College/School: College of Arts & Sciences

Date (Month/Year): September 2022

Assessment Contact: Rubén Rosario Rodríguez

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? AY 2021-22

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2018

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? No

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

Learning Outcome 2: Graduate students will be able to articulate and apply the theories and methods that structure the study of theology and religion.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

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

Aside from required coursework for **THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology**, our primary vehicle for assessing Learning Outcome 2, students also complete an Annual Review Form and graduating students take part in an exit interview with the Masters Programs Coordinator using the 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 document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The collected data from both forms is reviewed at a special meeting of all the graduate faculty then each student receives an annual evaluation report from their graduate program coordinator. Furthermore, the department's Graduate Studies Committee uses this data in its ongoing evaluation of our programs. The assessment tools/rubrics are included with this report.

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)?

The primary tool for assessing this learning outcome is student performance in **THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology**, a foundational course currently required of all our graduate programs: MARE, MTS, and PHD. For Ph.D. students enrolled in the course the ultimate assessment is the first (of four) comprehensive exams taken after completion of the course. For Masters students, assessment is based primarily on coursework: (1) Assessed by course professor through course presentations, projects, and research papers; (2) graduate student performance is also assessed by the annual review process, assessed by a by group of faculty members considering the categories of the departmental Annual Review Form. Indirect assessment is conducted by the Master’s Program Coordinator through advisory meetings (at least one per semester) and exit interviews of graduating students using the departmental Exit Interview form. Attached please find a copy of our departmental Annual Review Form and Exit Interview Form used in program assessment.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology has been part of an ongoing conversation in the Graduate Studies Committee. As a member of that committee, I have had extensive conversations with the two faculty members who have taught this course most recently, Drs. Emily Dumler-Winckler and Elizabeth Block (themselves members of the Graduate Studies Committee), and we have made several decisions pertaining to this course as it relates to the Master of Arts in Religious Education and Master of Theological Studies: (1) Based on student performance, advisory conversations with MARE students, and exit interviews with graduating MARE students, the new redesign of the MARE program (due to be start receiving applicants Fall 2023) this course is no longer required for the MARE degree program. The Committee agrees that this course was designed to be a foundational course for advanced graduate studies and as structured is too demanding for MARE students whose goal is not doctoral work but teaching at the secondary school level. These students would be better served by the two-semester survey of Christian theology offered in **THEO 5270: Christian Tradition I** and **THEO 5280: Christian Tradition II**; (2) However, this course will still be required of MTS students whose goal is doctoral studies in Christian theology.

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?

The three of us—myself, Dr. Dumler-Winckler, and Dr. Elizabeth Block (Graduate Studies Coordinator for the department)—have had an ongoing conversation about this learning outcome and the course attached to it: **THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology**. We have come to realize that as constituted, there was much overlap between this course and **THEO 5280: Christian Tradition II (1500 to the present)** and have taken steps to make this course more focused on classic and contemporary texts in Theology that every graduate student ought to know before undertaking advanced graduate studies, and less on providing a survey of modern Christian thought (which is how the course was originally conceived). Syllabi from the two instructors who have taught this course most recently, Dr. Block and Dr. Dumler-Wimckler, are also submitted with this report.

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

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

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

Our next step is to revisit the design of this course, **THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology**, and make it a more suitable companion to **THEO 6000: Theories and Methods in Religious Studies** by providing a foundation in resources and methods in Theology. Our MTS and Ph.D. students interested in Constructive Theology and Theological Ethics have commented that they are required to take a methods course in Religion but not one in Theology, so our goal is to redesign THEO 6040 to better meet this need.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

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?

As a result of the assessment for Learning Outcome 1 (AY 2020-2021) and now Learning Outcome 2 (AY 2021-2022), we have implemented a redesign of the MARE program which now focuses on more theology content across 5 areas of study (Bible, Ethics, Church History, Theology, World religions), and in order to offer all these required courses within the 36-credit degree program have eliminated **THEO 6040: Intro to Christian Theology** as a required course in the Master of Arts in Religious Education.

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

These changes were made after a series of meetings and discussions with affected stakeholders, including faculty, current and former students, superintendents and principals from the Archdiocese of St. Louis Catholic secondary school system, in an effort to bring our MARE degree program into line with diocesan teacher certification standards and guided by the National Bishops' Curriculum for Secondary Education of the Catholic Church.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

That our students needed more coursework in theological content, providing a survey of the development of Christian theology and the biblical foundations of doctrine.

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

As the new MARE program is implemented, we will have to develop new assessment standards based on these desired outcomes for teacher certification.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

C: MTS/MARE Annual Review Form

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: 03.15.2022	
Name: redacted	Phone: redacted
Email: redacted	Banner ID: redacted
Graduate Program: MARE	Mentor: Dr. Ruben Rosario
Area of Specialization: Religious Education	

Are you on Academic Leave? 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
FALL 2021	THEO 5000	Introduction to the Old Testament	3	A-
	THEO5270	Christian Tradition I	3	B+
	THEO5930	Special Topics: Ecclesiology	3	A

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

Course #	Course Title	Credits
THEO 5100	Introduction to the New Testament	3
THEO 5280	Christian Tradition II	3
THEO 5930	Catholic Social Teaching	3

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).

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).

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
FALL 2021	Graduate assistant
SPRING 2021	Graduate assistant

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.

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.

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?



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.

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

Commentary



03.15. 2021

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): _____

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
Fall 2019

THEO 6040-01: Introduction to Christian Theology

Thursdays 2:30-5:00pm

Adorjan Hall 245C

Dr. Emily Dumler-Winckler

Office: Adorjan Hall 346

Meeting: I am happy to meet with you. I do not hold regular office hours, but generally keep T 2:15-4:30 free for student appointments. I am available other times as well by appointment.

Email: emily.dumlerwinckler@slu.edu

Course Description:

This course introduces major figures, texts, movements, and questions in modern theology, from Immanuel Kant to contemporary thinkers. Any introduction to Christian theology will be necessarily limited and constrained—it will introduce certain figures and texts, but not others; take up some questions, and leave others to the side. This course is no different. The focus here will be on the theological texts, problems, and questions that arise in modernity and shape the field and constructive task of theology today. We will consider key figures and texts that have contributed to, and in some cases birthed, the sub-fields of systematic, moral, political, historical, contextual, doctrinal, and constructive theology. Insofar as interest or necessity demands, we may concern ourselves with these distinctions and the relations among these sub-fields. Otherwise, we need not. So too, no single thematic or doctrinal focus guides our inquiries. That said, the key themes of the nineteenth and twentieth-century theologians with whom we will converse tend to center on questions of theological anthropology and ethics (freedom, nature, grace, suffering, solidarity, sin, virtue, redemption, liberation, revelation, power, and authority).

Our main task will be to converse with the mighty dead (and a few living), to ask which parts of our tradition are living, which of them are dead, and which of them might be resurrected amid the difficulties facing our social moment. The pre- and early-modern mighty dead (without whom a course like this would be impossible) will be ever-present in one form or another and may feature in our conversation at various points—they are certainly most welcome—but they will not be our main interlocutors.

Putting the mighty moderns to work in pursuit of our own questions and interests is perfectly legitimate. Is there another way to proceed? Of course, their interests or questions may be different from ours. So be it! After all, it is our interests, the questions we face in this time and place, that have brought us to them, that have led us to think that their concepts, distinctions, and vocabularies might be somehow useful to us. If we use these concepts, distinctions, and vocabularies to address questions they did not pose (and perhaps could not have imagined) or if we find conceptual depth in their vocabularies that they ignored (and perhaps could not have seen), then again, so be it. We need not approach the dead with merely antiquarian interest. Few of us will.

Still, we might want to understand their efforts in terms they could recognize, situate them among authorities that they could trust, and locate the antecedents that they actually have.

Doing so will no doubt help us to better understand their work according to its historical context. Acquiring this kind of understanding might be our primary interest and this too is perfectly fine.

Constructive (systemic, moral, political) theologians tend to gravitate toward inquiries of the first kind, historians of various stripes (of doctrine, of morals, and so on), to the second. Notice, however, the actual work of scholars rarely carves up so neatly—systematic theologians pose as historians of doctrine and vice versa. It is good to be as self-conscious as possible about one's own complicated aims. For textual help with this see both Robert Brandom's distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* specifications of conceptual content and Richard Rorty's treatment of the distinction between rational and historical reconstruction. They complement each other quite nicely.

- Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead* (Harvard, 2002), pp. 90-111.
- Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," in *Philosophy in History*, ed. R. Rorty, J.B. Schneewind, and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1984).

This seminar will tack back and forth between these two kinds of inquiries, and we will do our best to be self-conscious about changes in course.

A caveat is perhaps in order. This course presents an open canon of sorts—one version of the thinkers, movers, shakers, and questions that shape the field of theology today (Kant to present). But a similar course at another institution—whether North American or international—or another professor, might look very different. Why is this so? Should we not expect some measure of continuity among graduate seminars that serve as an introduction to the field of theology or at least mid to late modern theology? Some, certainly. But probably not as much as one might imagine. The field appears fragmented, the canons contested. This course is meant to orient us to the history of how this came to be, or at least why this appears to be the case today.

Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Be able to discuss with respect, charity, and rigor even the most difficult questions and topics that arise in the course;
- Be able to identify key themes in mid-late modern Christian theology, especially those related to anthropology and ethics.
- Expand the array of theological terms and methods at their disposal.
- Have improved skills in writing and oral communication.
- Have a stronger awareness of their own theological questions and views, how these relate to major currents in modern theology, and how they might be challenged by different views.

Course Requirements:

Seminar participation:

Each student will:

1. Lead the seminar on a rotating basis over the course of the semester.
2. Post discussion posts every week to blackboard (circa 500 words) in the appropriate week.

Students are expected to attend and prepare carefully for each meeting, contribute constructively to our discussions, and lead our inquiries on a rotating basis. Our time together will be spent mostly in discussion, with little to no formal lecture. I will start the class by introducing the text(s) and/or figure(s) under consideration, making some connections with previous weeks and the historical and intellectual context that informs the work, and then the student leader will have the opportunity to present initial remarks.

Our aim in discussion is to charitably and rigorously engage the texts for the week, the questions that we bring to them, and, most importantly, one another. Charity and rigor come packaged together. Apart they become semblances.

- For more on the principle of generosity, see Donald Davidson “Radical Interpretation” (1973) reprinted in *The Essential Davidson*.

Student leaders should prepare remarks to frame the discussion, identify a few passages for us to focus on, raise some carefully phrased questions or points about those passages, and be prepared to turn our attention to other aptly chosen passages as the conversation develops. The opening remarks should be between 5 and 15 minutes long, never more than that. As in any seminar, the idea is to get the conversation going by identifying specific texts, topics, and questions from the assigned readings, ones that deserve our attention and that will set before us some of the most important *conceptual matters, exegetical puzzles, and constructive themes*. The student leader(s) should be prepared to spell out the substance and significance of the texts and topics picked out, potential objections, and the merit of the position being developed or defended.

This preparation will often require some outside reading and reflection. So that the rest of us might benefit from this work, the student leader(s) might develop and then distribute an annotated bibliography of the outside reading that has proved helpful. This will presumably bear fruit in your papers and future research.

Blackboard Posts:

These will be graded pass/fail. To pass students must show some effort to grasp and engage (charitably and rigorously) the central arguments of the required readings. Our discussions will be all the better if you include specific comments and questions about specific portions of the text and include page numbers. These must be posted by no later than midnight on Wednesday so that we can collectively read them before our time together on Thursday.

As one of my teachers put it, “say something specific about something specific.” Such questions or comments might include: Why does the author say *that*, in *this* passage? What does *this* mean? How can *that* claim be justified? What assumptions or inferences are made in *this* claim, and what evidence might support it? Must I abandon *this* belief, if I accept *that* claim? *This* claim seems to be in tension with *that* one; how does the author reconcile the two? You may choose to state what you take to be the central arguments of an author or text, whether or not you agree and why, reasons given for their views, counter arguments and objections, or what

you find confounding, convincing, troublesome, or otherwise. Summary and generalization are the enemy. You do not need to develop a thesis or argument. Pick out a passage or two that might help focus our discussion. Offer your reflections, questions, hunches, and assessments. *Again*, the key is to say or ask something specific about something specific.

Research Paper:

A final research paper of 15-20 pages is due Dec. 12th. Please submit this to me as a word document by email. Any topic is fair game so long as it involves a close reading of at least one text considered in this course, includes extensive engagement with the relevant secondary literature, and makes a case, defends a point of view. (12 point font, 1 inch margins, use [Chicago method](#) of citation, include page numbers and a Bibliography—now is a great time to begin using a program like endnote or Zotero if you have not already done so).

To assist in the successful and timely completion of this assignment there are three related assignments.

1. A research bibliography on a topic/theme/question of your choosing (more TBA in class) due to me, by email **10/24**
2. An abstract of the paper—including the thesis and basic argument—and as much of an outline as you care to provide is due to me, by email: **11/14**
3. A rough draft of the paper is due by **4:00pm 12/03**. Students will exchange drafts with one other student in the course (TBD), and then receive feedback at the final class/dinner (see below).

Course Policies: (Perhaps obvious but no less prudential to put in writing...)

1. Texts: please bring all texts to class—ideally in hardcopy form. I appreciated the many advantages on online texts, but I do believe that we read and think differently with a hard copy of the text in hand. Same goes for notes. I strongly encourage you cultivate the habit of taking notes with pencil and paper. You may have your laptops/tablets open if you must, but I find that conversations tend to go better without them.
2. Timeliness: Please do arrive on time. I will do my best to start and end the seminar on time, or at least to take a break for those who need to leave. Those who may want to continue the conversation beyond class are welcome and encouraged to do so. If you know that you will be late or absent, please do let me know in advance.
3. Attendance: Attendance and active participation is vital to the success of this seminar, and to your success in this seminar. Weekly attendance is required. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade, unless accompanied by emailed documentation of a family or medical emergency.
4. Please review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on [academic honesty](#).
5. Please review SLU's [harassment policy](#).
6. Resources to support [student success](#) are available on campus.
7. Evaluation: I ask that each student take the time to complete a course evaluation online during the last week of classes.

Virtues and Success:

The activities and practices of this course—reading new texts, listening to others, pressing questions, holding one another accountable, defending a point of view, making assumptions

explicit, writing papers, leading seminar discussions, and so on—like activities of all kinds, require for their success the exercise of certain virtues. For instance, courage, docility, charity, forbearance and justice, come to mind. We gather around these shared texts to learn from them and from one another. The success of this course and of our endeavor as a community of theologians and scholars depends on us learning how to do this well together.

Required Books

Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*

Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life*

Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*. Cambridge

James Cone, *God of the Oppressed (20th anniversary edition)*

Gustavo Gutierrez *A Theology of Liberation*

Stanley Hauerwas, *The Work of Theology (or The Peaceable Kingdom)*

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue (ed. 3)*

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. II*

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *A Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study* 3rd Ed.

Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*

Paul Tillich *The Courage to Be*

Recommended Secondary Sources:

Livingston, Fiorenza, Coakley, & Evans, ed., *Modern Christian Thought: The Twentieth Century*

Electronic Reserve Materials: To find the reserves for our class:

1. go to the SLU ereserve page which can be found [here](#). Or via the SLU library homepage
2. Search for the course name, number, or instructor last name (Dumler-Winckler)
3. Enter the course password which is: theology

These readings are identified on the syllabus with the following symbol: [ER]

- A note about indispensable background and recommended readings:
 - The indispensable background texts are pre-modern and early-modern texts that I consider indispensable for grasping the theological import and significance of the required text for the week. It will be helpful to gain some familiarity with these before our class discussions.
 - The recommended readings are just that, recommended for your further study and edification. They are not required. There are there to suggest further avenues of study depending on your interests, and for your use in presenting or writing papers.

Schedule of Assignments:

Week 1: What is Enlightenment? (8/29)

- Immanuel Kant “What is Enlightenment?” (1784) (use German or English **trans. By Mary Gregor**)
- Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) (required ““The gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the exclusive sovereignty of pure religious faith is the coming of the Kingdom of God” and as much else as you can muster) read as much around as you can before our first class [ER]

Indispensable background:

- Augustine, *City of God* (especially Preface and Books II, XIX)
- Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, papal bull (1302)
- Martin Luther “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation” Letter

Recommended reading:

- Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism*
- Robert Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*.
- Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead, etc.*

Week 2: Modern Liberal Theology

Josh (9/5)

- Friedrich Schleiermacher, *A Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study* 3rd Ed. Terrence Tice (2011).

Indispensable background:

- G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (trans. Terry Pinkard)- will discuss in class
- Molly Farneth, *Hegel's Social Ethic* 2016. See also [Syndicate symposium on her book](#).
- B. A. Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church: Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology*

Recommended reading:

- Dorrien, Gary J. *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology*. 2012.
- Daniel Pedersen, *The Eternal Covenant: Schleiermacher on God and Natural Science* (I have permission to distribute the pdf to those interested—also available at the library).
- Daniel Pedersen, “Schleiermacher and Reformed Scholastics on Divine Attributes” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 2015.
- Daniel Pedersen, “Eternal Life in Schleiermacher’s The Christian Faith” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 2011.
- Hector, Kevin W. “The Mediation of Christ’s Normative Spirit: A Constructive Reading of Schleiermacher’s Pneumatology” *Modern Theology*, January 2008, Vol.24(1), pp.1-22.
- Hector, Kevin W. “Actualism and Incarnation: The High Christology of Friedrich Schleiermacher” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, July 2006, Vol.8(3), pp.307-322
- Julia Lamm, *The Living God: Schleiermacher’s Theological Appropriation of Spinoza*, 1996.
- Jacqueline Mariña, “Christology and anthropology in Friedrich Schleiermacher” in *Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, Cambridge University Press, 2006

Week 3: 19th-20th Century—Dissent, Non-conformists, Social Gospel

(9/12)

- Orestes Brownson, “[The Laboring Classes](#)” (1841)
- Walter Rauschenbusch “The Kingdom of God,” in *Theology for the Social Gospel* [ER]
- Dorothy Day, *Selected Writings*, 51-88 [ER]

Indispensable background:

- Orestes Brownson, “No Church, No Reform”

- St. Basil the Great *On Social Justice*

Recommended reading:

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)
- William Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*.
- Dorothy Day, *Selected Writings*, as much as you can muster of “On Pilgrimage (1948),” “In fields and Factories,” and “On Pilgrimage Twenty Years”
- Walter Rauschenbusch, *Theology for the Social Gospel*, as much as you can muster of Chs. 1, 8-11, 16).
- Gary Dorrien, *The New Abolition: W.E.B. DuBois and the Black Social Gospel; The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805 – 1900; The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity 1900-1950*. (the 3rd volume will shed light on the last half of the course)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Address to the Divinity School at Harvard,” “Self-Reliance,” “New-England Reformers,” “Experience”
- Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, a Slave*.

Week 4: Neo-Orthodoxy

Benjamin (9/19)

- Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (and if you can manage: “The Problem of Ethics Today” in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*) [ER]
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship* 43-93 [ER]

Indispensable background:

- Barth: selections in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*

Recommended reading:

- Barth, “The New World in the Bible” 15-30, “The Word of God as the Task of Theology” 171- 98 in *The Word of God and Theology* (SLU Pius eBook)
- Barth, “The Gift of Freedom” in *The Humanity of God*, 69-96.
- Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (45-65)
- J. Bowlin, “Barth and Aquinas on Election, Relationship, and Requirement”
- Paul Nimmo, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth’s Ethical Vision*.
- G. McKenny, *The Analogy of Grace: Karl Barth’s Moral Theology*

Week 5: Christian Realism

John (9/26)

- Reinhold Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man*, 1943 vol. 2.
- Martin Luther King Jr., “[Loving Your Enemies](#)”

Indispensable background:

- St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*.

Recommended reading:

- Gary Dorrien (see above)
- Robin Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism*. (1995/1997)
- Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman; Augustine and the Limits of Politics*

- Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (2010).

Week 6: Nouvelle Théologie/Ressourcement—Vatican II **Benjamin (10/3)**

- Henri De Lubac, Ch. 6: 101-18, Ch. 9: 167-84, Ch. 11: 207-21, Ch. 12: 222-238 in *Mystery of the Supernatural*. [ER]
- Karl Rahner, “Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace,” 297-318, and “The Theology of the Symbol,” and “Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions” in *Theological Investigations* [ER]
- [Gaudium et Spes](#)

Recommended background:

- Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*
- VonBalthasar, "Peace in Theology," in *Explorations in Theology V* “Dispossession and the Universal Mission” in *Who Is a Christian?* [ER]
- Murray, “Is It Basketweaving?,” in *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition*, 27-78 [ER]

Week 7: Christian Existentialism **Danny (10/10)**

- Paul Tillich *Courage to Be*, 1952
- Simone De Beauvoir, “The Independent Woman” in *The Second Sex*, 679-715 [ER]

Indispensable background:

- Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, 50-65 [ER]
- Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, Genealogy of Morals and Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. “[Parable of the Madman](#)”
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness / L'être et le néant* (1943)

Recommended Reading:

- Gabriel Marcel “Existence and Objectivity” (1925)
- David Congdon, *The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology*.

Week 8: Feminist Theology **John (10/17)**

- Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay*
- Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 1993. (selections)

Recommended:

- Christine de Pisan, *Letters on the Debate of the Rose* (1402), *Book on the City of Ladies* (1405) *The Treasure of the City of Ladies/The Three Virtues* (1405).
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)
- Margarete Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth-Century* (1845)

- Jane Addams, *A new conscience and an ancient evil* (1912), *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Results.* (1915) *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* (1916) *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922)
- Rosemary Radford Reuther, *The Church Against Itself* (1967), *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (1983), *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (1994), *Feminism and Religion in the 21st Century: Technology, Dialogue, and Expanding Borders* (2014).

Week 9: Theologies of Liberation: Black and Latinx American Felix (10/24)

- James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Ch. 7) “The Meaning of Liberation”
- Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, Ch. 6: 127-151 [ER]
- Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, Chapters 10-11 (and as much as you can muster) and *Essential Writings* Chapter One: “Toward a New Method: Theology and Liberation” (23-74).
- Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*, Chs. 4-5.

Indispensable background:

- Cornel West, *Cornel West Reader* (selections), and/or *Prophesy Deliverance* (selections)
- James Baldwin, “The Fire Next Time”
- David Walker’s *Appeal*
- *Confessions of Nat Turner* By Nat Turner [here](#)
- Exodus—the entire book of the Bible

Recommended reading:

- Cornel West, *Black Prophetic Fire*, Ch. 4: “The Heart of Democratic Existentialism: Ella Baker” Ch.6: “Prophetic Fire: Ida B. Wells”
- Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” *Where Do We Go From Here? Why We Can't Wait.*
- Patricia Hill Collins, “Defining Black Feminist Thought,” 379-94; “The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”, 116-22, “The Bridge Poem,” 266-67, and Audre Lorde, “I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities,” 292-95, all in McCann and Kim, in *Feminist Theory Reader*, 3rd edition.
- Karen Baker-Fletcher, “How Women Relate to the Evils of Nature,” Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, “The Loves and Troubles of African-American Women’s Bodies: The Womanist Challenge to Cultural Humiliation & Community Ambivalence,” M. Shawn Copeland, “Wading Through Many Sorrows: Toward a Theology of Suffering in a Womanist Perspective,” in Cannon & Townes, *Womanist Theological Ethics*, 64-79, 81-97, 135-54.
- “Feminist Theology: Latin American,” by María Pilar Aquino, and “Theology: Mujerista,” by Ada-María Isasi-Díaz, in *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, 114-26, 295-6.
- Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job* (1987).
- Nancy Pineda Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez* (2011).

Week 10: Process Theology Josh (10/31)

- Finish discussion of liberation theologies...
- John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (1996) (Josh’s selection)

Indispensable background:

- Albert North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (esp. Part V Ch. 2... and Part I Ch. 3).
- Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Essential Peirce* (selections including: 9, 14, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29)
- William James, *Pragmatism* and *A Pluralist Universe* (*Library of America*, 1988)
- Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (selections esp. Ch. 3, 7, 8).
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

Week 11: Modernity's Despisers (Postliberal Theo., Radical Orthodoxy) Danny (11/7)

- Primary: Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (2016).
- Secondary: Must have a sense of *After Virtue*, Introduction, 204-25, 256-63 [ER] (and as much else as you can muster)
- Tertiary: Stanley Hauerwas, *The Work of Theology*, Ch. 1, 3, 9.

Indispensable background and foreground:

- Stanley Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 1983; *Resident Aliens*,
- John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*
- John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 382-442 [ER]

Recommended background:

- C.L.R. James *The Black Jacobins* and *Beyond a Boundary*
- George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*.
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1981), *Whose Justice Which Rationality* (1988), *Three Rival Versions* (1990), *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), and *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (2016)
- Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation* (Harvard University Press) 2012.
- David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite*

Week 12: Constructive Theology and Secular Friends Felix (11/14)

- Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (all you can muster, but especially Introduction, Ch. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12).
- Cornel West, *The Cornel West Reader*, 1st ed Ch. 24 "The Crisis in Contemporary American Religion" and "The Historicist Turn in Philosophy of Religion" (357-372). d

Indispensable background:

- Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel*, and *Blessed Are the Organized*

Recommended reading:

- Cathleen Kaveny, *Ethics at the Edges of Law*, Ch. 2 "Creation and Covenant: Engaging Stanley Hauerwas," and Ch. 3. "Examples and Rules: Engaging Jeffrey Stout."
- Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*, "Introduction" (1-19) and "Conclusion" (341-52) (and wherever else your interest leads).
- John Bowlin, *Tolerance Among the Virtues* (2016).
- Shawn Copeland, *Body, Race, and Freedom* (2010).
- Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (2009).
- Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (2011).

- Kevin Hector, *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and the Conditions of Mineness*, Oxford University Press, (2016). (and *Theology Without Metaphysics*)

Week 13: The Conversation Extended

(10/21)

- Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy*.

Indispensable background:

- Bretherton, *Resurrecting Democracy: Faith, Citizenship and the Politics of a Common Life*

Week 14: Thanksgiving (no class 10/28)

Week 15: Christian Theology and Table Fellowship (12/5)

** For our final class, we will break bread with one another and discuss the themes of our course and more specifically your papers. We will meet at my home (2329 S. Compton Ave—please inform me of any dietary restrictions) 4-7PM. You will submit a draft of your paper to another student (this can still be very much a work in progress) at least 48 hours before we meet (so by 4:00pm 12/3). You will offer feedback on one another's papers in writing (not long, 1-2 pages).

During dinner, students will briefly present their thesis, arguments, lingering questions, etc. (prepare a brief synopsis) and the class will offer feedback and discussion.

Final papers are due one week later: Dec. 12th by midnight. Please submit them a word document so that I can easily provide comments throughout.

THEO 6040: Christian Theology Introduction

Saint Louis University • Fall 2021

Dr. Elizabeth Sweeny Block • elizabeth.block@slu.edu

Thursdays 9:00-11:45am • Adorjan Hall 245C

Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2pm (Adorjan 345) and by appointment

Course Description

Saint Anselm described theology as “faith seeking understanding,” that is, as an attempt to understand and interpret God’s revelation. Christian ethics, or moral theology, is one of theology’s sub-disciplines that seeks to answer the question “How should we live?,” drawing on the resources of the Christian tradition—Christian concepts, doctrines, categories, symbols, and sources—to do so. Theology and ethics are inseparable because ideas about God impact how we live, what we value, our ideals and aspirations. How we understand God and God’s relation to the world has everything to do with our daily lives. One cannot do theology without attending to the social implications of religious commitments.

Therefore, this course introduces some of the major figures, texts, movements, and questions in Christian theology, with an emphasis on moral theology or Christian ethics. Our focus will be on the theological texts, problems, and questions that arise in modernity and shape the constructive task of theology today. A guiding question for our course will be: what is theology? This leads to other questions. How did or do our thinkers understand the work of theology? What are the many implications of the theologies we will encounter? We will consider key figures and texts that have contributed to the sub-fields of systematic, moral, political, historical, contextual, doctrinal, and constructive theology. Key themes, including freedom, nature, grace, suffering, solidarity, sin, virtue, redemption, liberation, revelation, power, and authority, will be our focus.

We each bring our own interests and questions to this course, which is part of the fun. Our unique backgrounds and histories will influence how we approach these thinkers. We will aim to understand our thinkers on their own terms, in their historical contexts, as well as to engage these thinkers in light of our own questions and contemporary problems.

Course Objectives

- Read theological texts carefully and critically and discuss—both orally and in writing—these authors’ understandings of key theological/moral themes
- Identify, become familiar with, and compare major thinkers, texts, and movements in the history of Christian theology
- Develop/expand on your own theological questions and commitments and situate them in theological conversations already in progress
- Improve your academic writing and oral communication skills through class presentations, discussions, and a final paper

Course Requirements

Class Participation (25%)

This is a small, graduate-level seminar, and participation is critical. Attendance is expected at every class. This is *our* class, which means you should take responsibility for (no pun intended!) the discussion as much as I do. Active participation requires close reading (before class), attentive listening, and ongoing contributions to the conversation. Discussing the readings requires having the texts open in front of you and offering passages to support your claims. Take risks and make mistakes!

Lead Discussion (25%)

You will each lead the discussion twice throughout the semester. I will lecture very little in this course; it will primarily proceed through discussion. The leader should present initial remarks to start our discussion, identify passages that are of particular importance and that illuminate the author's argument(s), and be prepared with questions and other passages to keep our conversation moving forward. As the semester progresses, the discussion leader should also point us toward comparisons of our authors and concepts. The discussion leader should also feel free to introduce connections to other thinkers or figures relevant to their own course of study. Bring your own interests to bear on the texts we engage in this course. Let's learn from one another and expand our thinking.

Canvas Posts (15%)

These are approximately 500-word responses to the reading(s) that you will post weekly on Canvas. Please post them by __:__pm on Wednesday so that we can all read them before class. These responses should focus on a particular issue, theme, question, and/or passage for discussion. You may choose to state what you take to be the author's or text's central argument, whether or not you agree and why, the reasons given or implied for the author's views, counter arguments, or what you find confounding, convincing, troublesome, etc.

Some questions to ask yourself as you write your responses: Are the author's conclusions well defended? Are they persuasive? Can the author's conclusions be disproved? If so, how? If I have a criticism of the author's argument, how might the author respond? How might another one of our authors respond to this author? Are there competing claims in a text, and how might they be reconciled? What assumptions or inferences are implicit (or explicit) in this claim? Are there claims in tension, and does the author reconcile them? What do I find convincing? Troubling? What passage or passages stand out and why? How does our author conceive of the work of theology? Your response should not simply be summary; you should engage/wrestle with the author's claims.

Final Paper (35%)

Your final paper of 12-15 pages for MTS/MARE students and 15-20 pages for Ph.D. students is due on Monday, December 13th. Your paper should be turned in via Canvas.

You should plan to engage at least one text from our course alongside other texts relevant to the topic and your argument. This should be an original paper and new work for you, not something you have written previously. You will treat this as a paper that you might present at an academic conference on one (or more) of the themes covered in this course. Therefore, you will begin with a research bibliography on the topic/theme/question you have chosen, due Monday, **October 25th**. By Monday, **November 15th**, you will turn in an abstract of the paper, including the thesis and basic argument; you may also submit an outline, if you wish. During our last class on **December 9th**, you will present your research-in-progress, for 15-20 minutes, and we will pose questions and engage your research. The final paper will be due Monday, **December 13th** by 5pm.

Course Texts

Required

- Avery Dulles, *Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*
- Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes* (useful, but not required)
- D. B. Robertson, *Love and Justice: Selections from the Shorter Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr*

- H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*
- Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*
- James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*
- Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is OR Quest for the Living God*
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*
- Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*
- Mark Massa, S.J., *The Structure of Theological Revolutions: How the Fight over Birth Control Transformed American Catholicism*

Recommended

- John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology*
- Tobias Winright, ed., *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics* (library ebook)
- Webster, Tanner, and Torrance, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*
- James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century* (vol. 1)
- Livingston, Fiorenza, Coakely, Evans, ed., *Modern Christian Thought: The Twentieth Century* (vol. 2)

A few books listed on the syllabus are available as ebooks through the library's website. I have noted this in parentheses next to these texts on the course schedule. The remaining readings will be accessible either on Canvas or through the library's e-reserve system. Instructions will be posted on Canvas for accessing the e-reserve readings.

Course Schedule

August 26th

Course Introduction: What is Christian Theology?

- Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* (1992), Ch. 1-6 (pp. 1-104)
- Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, eds., *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes* (pp. 1-18)

September 2nd

Augustine

- Jones and Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes*, pp. 90-94, 126-143
- Augustine, "[Of the Morals of the Catholic Church](#)," "[On Grace and Free Will](#)," "The Good of Marriage" (Canvas) and *City of God*, [Books XIV and XIX](#)
- Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Augustine: Sexuality, Gender and Women" (pp. 47-68) in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, ed. Judith Chelius Stark (Canvas)

Other Useful Resources to Keep on Your Radar:

- Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship*, especially Ch. 6: "Love as Political Virtue" (pp. 319-362)
- Charles Mathewes, *The Republic of Grace: Augustinian Thoughts for Dark Times* (2010) and *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition* (2001)
- Mary T. Clark, *Augustine of Hippo*

September 9th

Aquinas

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* ([New Advent](#))
 - I, qq. 5-6 (goodness and God)
 - I-II, qq. 6, 8, 12-13 (human acts), 26 (love), 54-55 (virtue), 61-62 (cardinal and theological virtues), 90-95, 100 (law), 106-108 (new law)
 - II-II, qq. 25-26 (charity), 40 (war), 63 (respect), 64 (murder), 154 (sex)
- Cristina L. H. Traina, *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law*, Ch. 2: Thomas and the Natural Law and Ch. 3: Natural Law Since Thomas (pp. 56-139) (not required, but strongly recommended, especially if you find reading Thomas himself challenging) (e-reserve)

Other Useful Resources to Keep on Your Radar:

- Jean Porter, *Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics* (1999) and *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (2005)
- Vincent W. Lloyd, *Black Natural Law* (2016)

September 16th

No Class

Read ahead and begin thinking about final paper topic and bibliography: what question do you want to answer?

Ph.D. students: work on Exam 1

September 23rd

Reformation, Modernity, Protestant Liberalism

(Meet on Zoom today)

- Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian” (1520) and “On Temporal Authority” (1523) (Canvas)
- Kant, “[What is Enlightenment](#)” (1784)
- Schleiermacher, excerpts from *The Christian Faith* (1830-1): Introduction (§ 1), Chapter 1 (§ 2-6, 11, 13, 15) (library ebook)

September 30th

Neo-Orthodoxy and Christian Realism

(TBD: Zoom or in-person)

- Karl Barth, “The Word of God as the Task of Theology” in *The Word of God and Theology* (1922) (library ebook) and “The Command of God and the Ethical Problem” (1940-42) (in *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 36.1, found [here](#))
- Reinhold Niebuhr, select essays (TBD) from *Love and Justice: Selections from the Shorter Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr*, ed. D. B. Robertson

October 7th

Christian Existentialism and Christian Moral Philosophy

- Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (1951), Introduction (pp. 3-68)
- H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (1963) (as much as you can read)

October 14th

Vatican II and Catholic Moral Theology

- Dulles, Chapter 7: “The Magisterium and Theological Dissent,” pp. 105-133
- [*Gaudium et Spes*](#)
- [*Dignitatis Humanae*](#)
- Excerpts (TBD) from [*Veritatis Splendor*](#)

October 21st

Liberation Theologies

- Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (1973), focusing on Chapters 1-2 and 9-11
- James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (1975), focusing on Chapters 1-3 and 7-9
- Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, Ch. 6, pp. 127-151 (e-reserve)

October 28th: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

November 4th

Feminist Theology

- Rosemary Radford Ruether, selection from *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (1983) (e-reserve)
- Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is* (1992) OR *Quest for the Living God* (2007)

November 11th

Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity

- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1981)

November 18th

Communitarian Ethics

- Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1991) and “On Keeping Theological Ethics Theological” (1983) (e-reserve)
- Kathleen Caveny, *Ethics at the Edges of Law*, Ch. 2: Creation and Covenant: Engaging Stanley Hauerwas” (e-reserve)

November 25th: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

December 2nd

Theological Paradigms, Developments, Revolutions

- Mark Massa, S.J., *The Structure of Theological Revolutions: How the Fight over Birth Control Transformed American Catholicism*

December 9th

Final Paper Presentations

December 13th: **Final Papers due via Canvas**

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor.

Important Policies and Procedures

Face Mask Policy

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, key safeguards like face masks have allowed SLU to safely maintain in-person learning. If public health conditions and local, state, and federal restrictions demand it, the University may require that all members of our campus community wear face masks indoors.

Therefore, any time a University-level face mask requirement is in effect, face masks will be required in this class. This expectation will apply to all students and instructors, unless a medical condition warrants an exemption from the face mask requirement (see below).

When a University-wide face mask requirement is in effect, the following will apply:

- Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to put on their masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.
- Students and instructors may remove their masks briefly to take a sip of water but should replace masks immediately. The consumption of food will not be permitted.
- Students who do not comply with the expectation that they wear a mask in accordance with the University-wide face mask requirement may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to those outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:
 - dismissal from the course(s)
 - removal from campus housing (if applicable)
 - dismissal from the University
- To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with a University-wide face mask requirement.

When a University-wide face mask requirement is not in effect, students and instructors may choose to wear a face mask or not, as they prefer for their own individual comfort level.

ADA Accommodations for Face Mask Requirements

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services (students) or Human Resources (instructors) to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University's [ADA Policy](#). Inquiries or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

In-Person Class Attendance

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns, as is the quality of our learning environments. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies and to create the conditions in which all students have the opportunity to learn and successfully complete their courses.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent

themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the [University Student Health Center](#) for immediate assistance.

2. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID-19 symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activities per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive.
3. Students are responsible for notifying their instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), students also are responsible for all material covered in class and must work with the instructor to complete any required work. In situations where students must be absent for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, they also must work with the instructor to determine the best way to maintain progress in the course as they are able based on their health situation.
4. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), students may be asked to provide medical documentation when a medical condition impacts a student's ability to attend and/or participate in class for an extended period of time.
5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official, or due to an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, shall be considered "Authorized" absences

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 through which SLU fulfills 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 full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Title IX

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 harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. 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.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <https://www.lighthouse-services.com/StandardCustomURL/LHILandingPage.asp>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>

IMPORTANT UPDATE: SLU's Title IX Policy (formerly called the Sexual Misconduct Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020.

Please take a moment to review the new policy and information at the following web address:

<https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>. Please contact the Anna Kratky, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

THEO 6040: Christian Theology Introduction

Saint Louis University • Fall 2022

Dr. Elizabeth Sweeny Block • elizabeth.block@slu.edu

Thursdays 9:00-11:45am • Adorjan Hall 245C

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Saint Anselm described theology as “faith seeking understanding,” that is, as an attempt to understand and interpret God’s revelation. Christian ethics, or moral theology, is one of theology’s sub-disciplines that seeks to answer the question “How should we live?” drawing on the resources of the Christian tradition—Christian concepts, doctrines, categories, symbols, and sources—to do so. Theology and ethics are inseparable because ideas about God impact how we live, what we value, our ideals and aspirations. How we understand God and God’s relation to the world has everything to do with our daily lives. One cannot do theology without attending to the social implications of religious commitments.

Therefore, this course introduces some recent figures, texts, movements, and questions in contemporary Christian theology, with an emphasis on moral theology or Christian ethics. Our focus will be on the theological texts, problems, and questions that shape the constructive task of theology today. A guiding question for our course will be: what is theology? This leads to other questions. How did or do our thinkers understand the work of theology? What are the many implications of the theologies we will encounter? How are they alike or distinct? What sources and methods do our authors use? We will consider new and recent texts and thinkers that contribute to the sub-fields of systematic, moral, political, and constructive theology.

We each bring our own interests and questions to this course, which is part of the fun. Our unique backgrounds and histories will influence how we approach these thinkers. We will aim to understand our thinkers on their own terms, in their contexts, as well as to engage these thinkers in light of our own questions and contemporary problems.

Course Objectives

- Read theological texts carefully and critically and discuss—both orally and in writing—these authors’ understandings of key theological/moral themes
- Identify many of the questions driving the work of moral and constructive theology today
- Compare different understandings of theology and distinct theological methods
- Develop/expand on your own theological questions and commitments and situate them in theological conversations already in progress
- Improve your academic writing and oral communication skills through class presentations, discussions, and a final paper

Course Requirements

Class Participation (20%)

This is a small, graduate-level seminar, and participation is critical. Attendance is expected at every class. This is *our* class, which means you should take responsibility for (no pun intended!) the discussion as much as I do. Active participation requires close reading (before class), attentive listening, and ongoing contributions to the conversation. Discussing the readings requires having the texts open in front of you and offering passages to support your claims. Take risks and make mistakes!

Moderate Discussion (20%)

You will each moderate the discussion twice throughout the semester. I will lecture very little in this course; it will primarily proceed through discussion. The leader should present initial remarks to start our discussion, identify passages that are of particular importance and that illuminate the author's argument(s), and be prepared with questions and other passages to keep our conversation moving forward. As the semester progresses, the discussion moderator should also point us toward comparisons of our authors and concepts. The discussion leader should also feel free to introduce connections to other thinkers or figures relevant to their own course of study. Bring your own interests to bear on the texts we engage in this course. Let's learn from one another and expand our thinking.

Short Written Assignments (20%)

Most weeks, you will have a short, written assignment to help you make progress on your final research paper. See the schedule below.

Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (10%)

You will submit a 1-page thesis proposal with an annotated bibliography of 5-10 primary sources relevant to your research topics on October 13th.

Final Paper (30%)

Your final paper of 10-12 pages for MTS/MARE students and 15-20 pages for Ph.D. students is due on Tuesday, December 13th. Your paper should be turned in via Canvas.

Grading Scale

94-100 %	A	Excellent
90-93.9 %	A-	
88-89.9 %	B+	
83-87.9 %	B	Good
80-82.9 %	B-	
77-79.9 %	C+	
73-76.9 %	C	Satisfactory
70-72.9 %	C-	
60-69.9 %	D	Poor
Below 60 %	F	Failed

Course Texts

Avery Dulles, SJ, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*
Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*
Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity*
Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*
Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism*
Todd Whitmore, *Imitating Christ in Magwi: An Anthropological Theology*
Nichole Flores, *The Aesthetics of Solidarity: Our Lady of Guadalupe and American Democracy*

Recommended:

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Ninth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)* Ninth Edition

Wayne Booth, et. al., *The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)* Fourth Edition

Schedule of Class Meetings

Readings and written assignments are to be completed *before class* on the date listed.

9/1 Introduction
Avery Dulles, SJ, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*

9/8 Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*

Written Assignment #1: Write a brief paragraph in which you identify: (1) the broad theological topic you want to explore (feminist theology, liberation theology, Black theology, political theology, fundamental moral theology, virtue, sacraments, ecclesiology, etc.), (2) primary sources you are considering, and (3) a preliminary problem you hope to address in your research on this topic. Come prepared to share with the rest of the class!

9/15 Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity*, Prelude and Chapters 1-2

Written Assignment #2: Complete the “Quick Tip” on p. 26 of *The Craft of Research* (“A Checklist for Understanding Your Readers”) and write a brief paragraph in which you identify the primary audience who will be reading your research.

9/22 Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity*, Chapters 3-5 (as much of 5 as you can)

Written Assignment #3: Reference Materials Worksheet (handout will be distributed)

Optional, but encouraged:

7pm Religion & Complex Social Issues Panel: Abortion

Dr. Emily Reimer-Barry (University of San Diego) and Dr. Tricia Bruce (University of Notre Dame)
Carlo Auditorium in Tegeler Hall

9/29 Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity*, Rest of Chapter 5, plus Chapters 6, 7, and Coda

Written Assignment #4: One paragraph thesis statement for your research paper in which you’ve (1) identified the major theological area of investigations, (2) identified a clear theological problem you are addressing, and (3) offered a hypothesis/potential solution to this problem.

10/6 Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Part I)

10/13 Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Part II)

Written Assignment #5: Submit a 1-page thesis proposal with an annotated bibliography (see Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 135-163) of 5-10 primary sources relevant to their research topics.

10/20 Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism*, Chapters 1-4

- 10/27 Fall Break/No Class: Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism*, Chapters 5-6 (Can we meet before the break to discuss?)
- 11/3 Todd Whitmore, *Imitating Christ in Magwi: An Anthropological Theology*, Chapters 1-3
- Written Assignment #6: Turn in a **1-page outline of the basic argument** of your paper. Remember, at this stage we are not assuming that your research is complete, but you should be able to articulate a step-by-step skeleton outline of your argument.
- Strongly Encouraged: 7pm Bellarmine Lecture
Andrew Prevot (Boston College), “Holy Detachment: Insights from Early Christian Asceticism and Black Theology”
Sinquefield State Room, DuBourg 409
- 11/10 Todd Whitmore, *Imitating Christ in Magwi: An Anthropological Theology*, Chapters 4-6
- Written Assignment #7: Read the “Quick Tip” on pgs. 150-151 of *The Craft of Research* (“Three Predictable Disagreements”) and anticipate potential counterarguments to your thesis (1 page).
- 11/17 Todd Whitmore, *Imitating Christ in Magwi: An Anthropological Theology*, Chapters 7-8 and Appendix
- **Turn in a rough draft of your paper to me by email by Monday, 11/21**
- 11/24 Thanksgiving
- 12/1 Nichole Flores, *The Aesthetics of Solidarity: Our Lady of Guadalupe and American Democracy*
- **Submit an optional second draft of your paper, with revisions completed, if you wish to receive additional feedback.**
- 12/8 Last Class: Nichole Flores, *The Aesthetics of Solidarity: Our Lady of Guadalupe and American Democracy*
- 12/13 Final Papers due on Canvas by 5pm

The syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor.

Scroll down for academic policies.

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 through which SLU fulfills 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 full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Title IX

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 harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. 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.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>

Statement on Face Masks

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, key safeguards like face masks have allowed SLU to safely maintain in-person learning. If public health conditions and local, state, and federal restrictions demand it, the University may require that all members of our campus community wear face masks indoors.

Therefore, any time a University-level face mask requirement is in effect, face masks will be required in this class. This expectation will apply to all students and instructors, unless a medical condition warrants an exemption from the face mask requirement (see below).

When a University-wide face mask requirement is in effect, the following will apply:

- Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to put on their masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.
- Students and instructors may remove their masks briefly to take a sip of water but should replace masks immediately. The consumption of food will not be permitted.
- Students who do not comply with the expectation that they wear a mask in accordance with the University-wide face mask requirement may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to those outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:
 - dismissal from the course(s)
 - removal from campus housing (if applicable)
 - dismissal from the University
- To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with a University-wide face mask requirement.

When a University-wide face mask requirement is not in effect, students and instructors may choose to wear a face mask or not, as they prefer for their own individual comfort level.

ADA Accommodations for Face Mask Requirements

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services (students) or Human Resources (instructors) to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University's [ADA Policy](#). Inquiries or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

Statement on In-Person Class Attendance and Participation

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns, as is the quality of our learning environments. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies and to create the conditions in which all students have the opportunity to learn and successfully complete their courses.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the [University Student Health Center](#) for immediate assistance.
2. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID-19 symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activities per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive.

3. Students are responsible for notifying their instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), students also are responsible for all material covered in class and must work with the instructor to complete any required work. In situations where students must be absent for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, they also must work with the instructor to determine the best way to maintain progress in the course as they are able based on their health situation.
4. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), students may be asked to provide medical documentation when a medical condition impacts a student's ability to attend and/or participate in class for an extended period of time.
5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official, or due to an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, shall be considered "Authorized" absences