**Theology through the Creed**

RELG 333 Principles of Theology 1: W2020 TR 4:05-5:25
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**Description**

An introduction to the central questions, claims, and categories of Christian thought, considered in their narrative and credal context, with discussion of the nature of theology and the relation between faith and reason.

**Goals**

- to examine the Nicene Creed, and selected primary and secondary literature, with a view to increasing both historical and theological literacy
- to begin learning how to think theologically, and how to distinguish between true and false theological claims

**Requirements**

- Regular attendance and preparation in the assigned readings. Students will be quizzed in class about these brief excerpts. **20%**

- A close reading of Robert Wilken’s *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (c. 300 pp.; available at Paragraph Books). There will be a brief in-class examination on **25 February** to test your familiarity with this book. **10%**

- A paper engaging Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* (available in print or at https://dkbl.alexanderstreet.com/cgi-in/DKBL/hub.py?type=volume_details&display=church). You may choose one section, according to interest, from §§ 28–31, 57–61, 64–66. Begin browsing in January and indicate your choice no later than **15 February**. **30%**

This paper of 3400–3800 words, due at the beginning of class on **17 March**, must:

- show a solid grasp of Barth by way of careful and contextually sensitive exposition of at least 75 pp. of the *Dogmatics* [18]
- successfully employ two or more high-quality secondary sources to assist you in understanding and evaluating what you have read [8]
- be properly cited and carefully edited [4]

NB: Late papers, penalized by 1 mark, must be turned in on 19 March.
• Final examination. 40%

The final exam may include both short-answer and essay questions.

Additional information

• Lectures and PowerPoint will be accompanied by classroom discussion and questions based on the primary readings, which are short excerpts accessed via MyCourses.
• Notes will be taken by hand. No computers or electronic devices may be used in the classroom except in cases of disability.
• Consultation is available after class or T/R by appointment in Birks 208.
• PFNP and related matters: Surnames are used by the instructor. No one is required to adopt views, claims, or linguistic forms with which they disagree, though all are bound by the obligations of the syllabus and by traditional standards of civility.
• McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. For more information, see ‘Keeping it Honest’: www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/
• In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Petrus Alphonsi (c. 1109)
Lecture and Reading Outline

January (First Article)

7 What is Theology?
9 What if Plato is wrong?  R1 John Paul II, Faith and Reason
14 Who or what is God?  R2 Justin, Dialogue with Trypho
16 Lex Orandi  R3 Irenaeus, Demonstration
21 Gnosticism and its Antidote  R4 Irenaeus, Against Heresies
23 Of Elves, Angels, and Men  R5 Tolkien, Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth
28 Nature and Grace  R6 Aquinas, Summa Theologiae
30 Why Aristotle wasn’t enough  R7 Basil, Hexaemeron

February (Second Article)

4 Trinitarian Theology  R8 Athanasius, On the Incarnation
6 What difference does an iota make?  R9 Aquinas, Summa Theologiae
11 Mother of God!  R10 Leo, Letter to Flavian
18 The Problem of Atonement  R12 Anselm, Why God Became Man
20 Resurrection: Justice and Power  R13 Augustine, On the Trinity
25 Ascension: War in Heaven  R14 John, Apocalypse [Wilken Quiz]
27 Parousia: Ecce Homo!  R15 Cyril, Catechetical Lectures

Reading Week [paper due 17 March]

March (Second & Third Articles)

10 The Quick, the Dead, & the Damned  R16 Gospel of Matthew / Catechism
12 The Lord and Giver of Life  R17 Paul / Basil / Gregory, On the Holy Spirit
17 The Peoples of the Covenant  R18 Barth, Church Dogmatics
19 The Marks of the Church  R19 Vatican II, Lumen Gentium
24 Moral Theology  R20 Augustine, Morals
26 Political Theology  R21 Farrow, Ascension Theology
31 Sacramental Theology  R22 Trent, Session 13 / Calvin, Institute IV

April (Third Article)

2 Grace upon Grace  R23 Augustine, Trinity / Paul, 1 Corinthians
7 The End of Man  R24 John / Irenaeus / Augustine, City of God
9 Truth and Error  R25 Irenaeus
Questions for Study and Reflection

NB: On the exam you should draw on the lectures and supplemental notes, and your assigned readings and texts, for help in formulating your answers. It is a good idea to make notes on which of the readings might be especially useful in addressing particular questions. Add your own questions, based on the readings, and try to answer them. Keep a list of maxims that might qualify as principles of theology.

What were the essential points in the primitive Christian gospel? Why was this message a ‘scandal’ to Jews and ‘foolishness’ to Greeks?

Is there a link between Christian belief in the Trinity and the Christian claim that reason and knowledge are not independent of faith?

What follows from the claim that the one God is maker of everything, and that God makes everything ex nihilo? Are there implications for secular pursuits in science, politics, law, etc.?

What does Christianity have to say about the imago dei (image of God) in human beings?

In the controversies that preceded the first ecumenical council, who were some of the influential thinkers and how did they differ in their understanding of God and the God-world relation?

Why was the inclusion in the creed of ‘homoousion’ so controversial? What was at stake?

Why is Mary called Theotokos? What are the main teachings about Mary in classical Christianity and in the Catholic tradition?

What is the Chalcedonian doctrine of the incarnation, and how is it related to the Christian understanding of salvation?

What factors are thought to have contributed to Jesus being sentenced to death?

In what sense or senses was Jesus’ death an offering or atonement?

How might we interpret the claim, in its original context, that Jesus is ‘Son of God’?

How does the larger narrative of scripture help to interpret the resurrection and ascension of Jesus?
How does the doctrine of the parousia bear on the Christian view of history?

What does the creed have to say about the Holy Spirit, and what arguments were used in support of the full deity of the Spirit?

Why was the dispute about the filioque deemed important?

How does the doctrine of the Trinity support Christian practices of prayer and worship?

What is the church? What are the credal ‘marks’ of the church, and what are some of the meanings that have been given to the notion of catholicity?

What is the relation between scripture and tradition as authorities for Christian faith?

What does classical Christianity have to say about the nature of sin, and why is the sacrament of baptism said to remit sins?

How is the Christian faith expressed and supported by sacraments? What are sacraments?

What is grace? What are justification and sanctification, and how do they depend on grace?

“Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it’: What is the primary basis and evidence for this claim, and what impact does it have on the formation of Christian culture?

Is death natural? What impact does belief in the resurrection of the body have on Christian ethics? On Christian political thinking?

Does it make sense to speak of a specifically Christian approach to the relation between justice and power?

What, Christianly understood, is the good life?

What is meant by ‘the life of the world to come’?

How is the relationship between Christianity and culture changing in western society? Are Christianity’s contributions to art, music, architecture, science, ethics, politics and social order, the academic life, etc., as significant today as once they were?
General Bibliography

Allen, P. and Peter Hess, Catholicism and Science
Aulen, G. Christus Victor
Balthasar, H. U. von, Mysterium Paschale
Barth, K. Dogmatics in Outline / Church Dogmatics
Bernard Mathaler, The Creed
Bonhoeffer, D. Christology
Bulgakov, The Bride of the Lamb
Chenu, M. D. Is Theology a Science?
Chesterton, G. K. Orthodoxy
Cory, C. and D. Landry, The Christian Theological Tradition
Cullmann, O. Early Christian Worship
Dalførth, I. Theology and Philosophy
Dawson, C. Enquiries into Religion and Culture
Denzinger, H. The Sources of Catholic Dogma
Dulles, A. Models of the Church
Emery, G. The Trinity
Farrow, D. Ascension Theology
Ford, D. The Modern Theologians
Gambero, L. Mary and the Fathers of the Church
Gillespie, M. The Theological Origins of Modernity
Gilson, E. Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages
Gregory, B. The Unintended Reformation
Guardini, R. Freedom, Grace and Destiny
Gunton, C. The Christian Faith / The Triune Creator / Yesterday and Today
Hall, D. J. Professing the Faith
Harnack, A. What is Christianity?
Hart, D. The Story of Christianity / Atheist Delusions / The Beauty of the Infinite
Hart, T. Faith Thinking
Healy, N. Thomas Aquinas
Hengel, M. The Atonement
Heron, A. A Century of Protestant Theology / Table and Tradition
Hogg, D. Anselm of Canterbury
Holifield, E. B. Theology in America
Hodgson, P. & R. King, eds. Christian Theology
Jenson, R. Systematic Theology
Journet, C. Theology of the Church
Kelly, J. N. D. Early Christian Doctrines
Kerr, F. Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians
Kreeft, P. Catholic Christianity / The Philosophy of Tolkien
LaCugna, C. God With Us
Levering, M. Sacrifice and Community
Lewis, C. S. The Abolition of Man
Livingston, J., ed. Modern Christian Thought
Lossky, V. Orthodox Theology / The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church
MacKintosh, H. Types of Modern Theology
McCabe, H. God Matters
McGrath, A. Christianity: An introduction / Christian Theology
Mangina, J. Karl Barth
May, G. Creatio ex Nihilo
Meilaender, G. *Faith and Faithfulness*
Moltmann, J. *Jesus Christ for Today’s World / The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*
Neibuhr, R. *Christ and Culture*
Neuhaus, R. J. *Death on a Friday Afternoon*
Newbigin, L. *The Household of God*
Nichols, A. *Epiphany: A theological introduction to Catholicism / The Shape of Catholic Theology*
O’Callaghan, P. *Christ our Hope: An introduction to Eschatology*
O’Connor, F. *Spiritual Writings*
O’Donnell, J. *The Mystery of the Triune God*
O’Donovan, O. *Resurrection and Moral Order / The Desire of the Nations*
Pannenbrand, W. *The Apostles’ Creed in the Light of Today’s Questions / Systematic Theology*
Pelikan, J. *Credo / The Christian Tradition / Jesus through the Centuries*
Perry, T. *Mary for Evangelicals*
Peters, T. *God as Trinity*
Rahner, K. *The Church and the Sacraments*
Ramsey, B. *Beginning to Read the Fathers*
Reardon, P. *Reclaiming the Atonement*
Ratzinger, J. *Introduction to Christianity / Jesus of Nazareth / Called to Communion*
Rist, J. *Augustine*
Sayers, D. *The Mind of the Maker*
Schleiermacher, F. *The Christian Faith*
Schindler, D. C. *The Catholicity of Reason*
Schmemann, A. *The Eucharist*
Schmitz K. *The Gift: Creation*
Scotti, R. A. *Basilica*
Smail, T. *The Giving Gift*
Sonderegger, K. *Systematic Theology*
Stark, R. *The Victory of Reason*
Sullivan, J. E. *The Image of God*
Topping, R. *Happiness and Wisdom: St Augustine’s Early Theology of Education*
Torrance, J. B. *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*
Torrance, T. F. *The Mediation of Christ / The Trinitarian Faith / Atonement*
Towey, A. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*
Weinandy, T. *Athanasius / Does God Suffer?*
Wood, R. *The Gospel according to Tolkien*
Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the Question of God (5 vols)*
Young, F. *The Making of the Creeds*

**Dictionaries & Encyclopedias**

*The Blackwell Companion to Catholicism*
*The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*
*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*
*Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*
*Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*
*Encyclopedia of Catholic Literature*
*Encyclopedia of Catholic Social Thought, Social Science, and Social Policy*
*New Dictionary of Christian Theology*
*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*
*Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*
Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology / Oxford Handbook of Eschatology [etc.]
Religion Past and Present
Sacramentum Mundi

Journals

Communio
Concilium
Faith and Philosophy
First Things
Greek Orthodox Theological Review
International Journal of Systematic Theology
Journal of Early Christian Studies
Journal of Ecclesiastical History
Journal of Theological Studies
Journal for the Study of the New Testament
Literature and Theology
Medieval Philosophy and Theology
Modern Theology
Nova et Vete
Pro Ecclesia
Recherches de Theologie Ancienne et Medievale
Scottish Journal of Theology
St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly
Studies in Christian Ethics
Theological Studies
The Thomist
Touchstone

Web Resources

www.biblestudytools.com
www.vatican.va / www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
www.earlychurchtexts.com
www.creeds.net
www.bible-researcher.com/ecumenical-creeds.html
www.newadvent.org
www.ccel.org
www.iclnet.org
www.papalencyclicals.net
www.ecumenism.net
www.iconexplained.com/homepage.htm
www.scu.edu/pm/resources/theoglossary/print.html
www.fordham.edu/halsall
www.clerus.org/bibliaclerus/index_eng.html
www.newadvent.org/cathen/02055a.htm
http://dkbl.alexanderstreet.com [Karl Barth Digital Library]
https://gavinortlund.com/2012/10/04/barth-on-atonement/
http://philreligion.nd.edu/research-initiatives/analytic-theology/lecture-series/
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/christiantheology-philosophy/#Ato
**Modern Latin Version of Christianity's Nicene or Ecumenical Creed:**

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est, et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venetur in cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.


**ET used in the Catholic liturgy:**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages: God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Greek text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381/451 AD) is available here:


Icon source:

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Nicene_Creed