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MCS-545: Theology I

GOD, REVELATION, AND HUMANITY

Master of Christian Studies

Course Description:

A study of the nature, method, and content of Christian Theology. Theology I the course will focus on prolegomena, God and revelation, and the doctrine of humanity.

This course is designed for the master's-level student and required for all students seeking an MCS from Union University. No formal or previous study of theology is required to complete this course, although awareness of various Christian beliefs will be helpful.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course, the student will have...

1. A deeper appreciation for the role of theological reflection in the ministry of the Church and the life of the believer with specific reference to the doctrines of covered in this section.
2. An introductory knowledge of the different aspects of theological reflection (i.e. *biblical, historical, philosophical* and *practical*) as related to each of the course doctrines.
3. Some key skills and principles for...
 - a. Further study of Christian doctrine
 - b. Reading and responding to the contextual and cultural questions put to Christian doctrine.
 - c. Meeting the needs of the local church to grow in wisdom and understanding of doctrine.

Course Texts:

Required:

Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001).

Gary Meadors, ed. *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).

Suggested:

Justo L. González. *Essential Theological Terms* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005)

Course Assignments:

- 1. Class Participation:** Each student is expected to engage with course lectures and contribute as fully as possible to class discussions, which means that all reading should be covered thoroughly and the student is prepared to engage it critically along with the lectures. From time to time, students will be delegated the specific responsibilities in order to initiate discussion and conversation regarding the implications and applications of the course material.
- 2. Reading Evaluation:** For the six sections covered in the Erickson's text (pp. 15-211), students will take four quizzes through Blackboard (<https://eclass.uu.edu>). For the Meador's volume, students will complete a four-part book review. Each part of the review will consist of a 500 word summary and evaluation of the four major sections of the book and submitted on Blackboard. Guidelines for this project can be found below.
- 3. Church Integration Project:** Each student will develop an original teaching/preaching plan of 3 to 6 sessions for their local church context that incorporates the specific topics covered in the course into the teaching ministry of the church. More details on this project can be found below. Students will make copies of their project for each member of the course and make a short presentation at the last class meeting.
- 4. Final Examination:** On the last time the class meets, students will take a comprehensive exam on all aspects of the course material: reading, lectures and class discussion.

Course Evaluation: Union's official grading policy: A = 95-100 B = 85-94 C = 75-84 D = 65-74 F = below 65

Class Participation	10%
Reading Quizzes	20 %
Book Review	20 %
Church Integration Project	20 %
Final Examination	30%

Course Calendar (Subject to revision under the instructor's discretion):

- June 8: Course Introduction and Lecture 1: 'Prolegomena to Theology'
- June 15: Lecture 2: 'The Doctrine of Revelation' [Erickson Quiz #1, Meadors Review #1]
- June 22: Lecture 3: 'The Doctrine of God Part One: The Trinity' [Erickson Quiz #2, Meadors Review #2]
- June 29: Lecture 4: 'The Doctrine of God Part One: God the Father'
- July 6: Lecture 5: 'The Providence of God' [Erickson Quiz #3, Meadors Review #3]
- July 13: Lecture 6: 'Theological Anthropology'
- July 20: Lecture 7: 'The Doctrine of Sin' [Erickson Quiz #4, Meadors Review #4]
- July 27: Final Exam and Presentation of Church Integration Projects

Attendance – regular and punctual attendance to course lectures is expected of all students and essential to success in this course. Students are allowed one absence for whatever reason, but the second and third absence will incur a five point deduction off of the course grade. Any student missing more than three classes will not pass the course. Missed assignments or exams cannot be made up. If a student must miss a class, they can email the assignment to the instructor. Students with advanced knowledge of an appropriate class absence should consult the instructor in advance. Also, students should have cell phones switched off during class and return promptly from all class breaks.

Cheating and Plagiarism – These infractions will be taken quite seriously and are open to the full penalty of the university's policies.

Individual Needs – The instructor commits to making any necessary accommodations for students that may have specific needs that might affect their responsibilities for this course. Communicate these to the instructor at the start of the semester.

MCS-545: Theology I GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEW

Assignment Description:

For each of the four major sections in *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*, students will write 500 word reviews that critically engage the content and reflect upon its implications.

Assignment Objective:

Reading too quickly through the different arguments offered in a four views volume can be problematic. Composing summaries of each major part of the reading will help you recall the most significant portions and pay careful attention to the nuances and distinctions of each argument. These summaries will be a means of further digesting the content of Christian doctrine covered in this course.

Reading in Gary Meadors' *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*:

Part 1: A Principlizing Model – Walter C. Kaizer Jr.

Part 2: A Redemptive-Historical Model – Daniel M. Doriani

Part 3: A Drama of Redemption Model – Kevin J. Vanhoozer

Part 4: A Redemptive-Movement Model – William J. Webb

Project Instructions:

When composing your summary and analysis of the reading you have done, consider answering **some** of the following questions in your discussion of the reading:

1. What was main point or distinction each proposal? What are the most important assumptions or supporting points under the main point?
2. How did each author defend his presentation of his particular model? How did he appeal to or handle Scripture?
3. What were the major strengths or weaknesses of that model? Which authors presented strong counter-arguments? What did they argue?
4. What did you learn from reading this section that was new or different for you?
5. What did you find most encouraging, challenging, and/or difficult?

MCS-545: Theology I

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH INTEGRATION PROJECT

Assignment Description:

Each student will develop an original teaching/preaching plan of 3 to 6 sessions for their local church context that incorporates one of the specific topics covered in the course into a potential resource for the teaching ministry of their church.

Assignment Objective:

One of the stated purposes of the Master of Christian Studies curriculum is to integrate the learning in the classroom with the “real world” of Christian ministry (e.g. sermon series, youth group study, women’s bible study, etc.). For a class in theology, one way to make this connection is to plan a way to teach or preach intentionally on a theology topic in a ministry situation that makes sense for a chosen congregation or class.

Project Options: Select one of the following topics of doctrine to explore in your teaching project.

- ‘Theology: Nature and Method’
- ‘The Doctrine of Revelation’
- ‘The Attributes of God’
- ‘The Trinity’
- ‘The Providence of God’
- ‘Theological Anthropology’
- ‘The Doctrine of Sin’

Project Instructions:

Study your topic and organize it and prepare **detailed notes** for each session. If you are planning a preaching series, then you should have complete preaching notes/manuscript for each sermon, including main points, sub-points, illustrations, applications, and so on. Use the skills you have gained in other MCS courses. If you plan a teaching series, then develop a complete lesson plan for each session. Creativity is encouraged. (As a rule of thumb, plan on one full single-spaced page per sermon or lesson.)

When you prepare your project, put your name, the project title, and the ministry context as the first line of the first page. The project you submit must be hard copies:

1. **Required:** Three to six detailed sermon notes/lesson plans
2. **Optional:** Handouts (just as you would plan to distribute them in actual usage)
3. **Optional:** PowerPoint slides (print using the handout mode, six slides per page, vertical format)
Prepare ___ sets of your project (**stapled and hole-punched**) and bring them to the last class.

My Topic: _____ Ministry Context: _____

Complete and Submit to the Instructor by July 6th.

Name: _____

Topic (example: The Trinity): _____

Ministry Context (example: Women’s Home Bible Study): _____