

Lutheran Theology Today

ST 6490 Topics in Contemporary Theology (half course)

Luther Seminary ~ ~ Fall 2006
Thursday 1:10 - 4 P.M. ~ Room: BH 30

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A collaborative and advanced seminar, which will investigate a specific topic of current interest in Christian systematic theology

OUR SECTION:

An advanced seminar devoted to the close reading and thoughtful discussion of works living Lutheran theologians. Our broad theme surrounds Christology and the theology of the cross.

LEARNING GOALS

In this class the student will learn to:

1. Understand and appreciate the recent works in systematic theology by current Lutheran theologians.
2. Become familiar with some of the major academic issues surrounding the topics of a theology of the cross, and Christology today.
3. Express your own theology clearly and present reasonable arguments for your opinions and beliefs.
4. Respect the intellectual rights of others, and treat them with respect.
5. Demonstrate the ability to construct a careful theological argument.

These goals will be measured by, inter alia, the following objectives:

1. Reflect critically and theologically upon required readings in class, including thoughtful oral participation in discussion.
2. Prepare summaries of the important aspects of our discussion.
3. Write an assigned essay developoing your own theological argument and position.
4. Prepare written, assigned questions and comments.

CONTENT

This course will be taught in a seminar format, with limited enrollment. Participation, keeping up with the readings, and regular attendance are required. On a rotating basis students will introduce and summarize the required reading. Each session you will bring with you typed questions and comments.

TEXT BOOKS AND READINGS

Required

1. Forde, G. *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Eerdmans).
2. Jenson, R. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Oxford).
3. Mannermaa, T. *Christ Present in Faith* (Fortress).
4. Pannenberg, W. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Eerdmans).

5. Thompson, D. *Crossing the Divide* (Fortress).
6. Online Essay: W. Pannenberg, "A Theology of the Cross," *Word and World* 8 (1988), 162-172, online at www.luthersem.edu/word&world.

Required Readings on Reserve:

The following readings are available on the MyLutherNet web page for this class under Library Links. You will not find these readings under my name in the library e-reserve pages. Also, the books they come from, if any, are also on reserve in the library.

- 1) Eberhard Jüngel, "My Theology," from *Theological Essays II* (T & T Clark, 1999).
- 2) Eberhard Jüngel, chapter 5 from *God as the Mystery of the World* (Eerdmans, 1986).
- 3) Andrew Root, "Theology of the Cross and Ministry in Our Time." {forthcoming}

Recommended

Anna M. Madsen, *The Theology of the Cross in Historical Perspective* (Pickwick Publications).

COURSE WORK AND EVALUATION

In a seminar, students are encouraged to participate by discussion with each other and with the instructor; dialog, questioning, and also responding to questions are the essence of theological inquiry. **Attendance is mandatory.** Your grade will suffer if you miss class (see below).

There are 300 possible points in the course, as outlined. In general, you can expect 90% to be the cut-off for an A-, 80% for a B-, etc.

Respondent (written)	50
Written Comments/Abstract	50
Term Paper	100
Participation/preparation	50
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Course Total	250

Plagiarism

The pressures of life sometimes tempt us to sin. Plagiarism is sin, defined in this case as taking credit for work that is not your own. This includes copying without quotation, excessive summarizing from sources (even if listed in a bibliography), or turning in your friend's old paper with you name on it. If you are caught plagiarizing in this class, you will flunk the class (get an F). *You must prove to me that you wrote the paper or essay.* If I suspect you of plagiarism, I will give you an oral exam on your paper which the author of the essay could easily pass (but not someone who just copied or summarized). *Please keep all notes and rough drafts of all essays and papers* until after you receive your final grade for this class. I may ask to see them!

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

In-Class Roles

1. Respondent: summarize assigned readings. On a rotating basis, you will be assigned the task of leading-off our discussion of the assigned readings for each day, by providing a 3 page summary of the readings (about 1000 words). Please make copies for everyone in the class. Please pay attention to the relevance of this reading for the overall theme of our course in deciding what to write about.

2. **Written Questions and Comments/Critique.** Every day of class please bring a set of three questions for clarification, and two comments or criticisms, all based on the required text. Make a copy for you and for me.

Term Paper

I will give you two options for your term paper. Your term paper will be a response to all of our class readings and course discussion. Your topic should be one brought up in at least three of our readings. Demonstrate with reference and in the content of your essay thoughtful engagement with the issues, authors, and ideas we have covered in class.

Option one: This option is for MDiv students, and MA students not in systematic theology. Read carefully the forthcoming article by Dr. Root listed in the required readings above. Write a ten-page, three thousand word critical response to this article. You must draw upon all the authors we have read in this class, and quote them at least two times in your paper.

Option Two: For postgraduate students and systematic theology MA students. This longer essay will be about 12-15 pages (about 4000 words)...Present your own theological argument on a topic of your choice, related to our class theme and readings.

Paper Outline/Abstract: bring an outline and abstract of your paper to the “final exam” last day of class. Make a copy for you and for me. You will give an oral presentation to us, summarizing your main argument.

General Remarks

In general, your papers should be written in good English style, and follow standard academic norms. You must use gender-inclusive language. Begin with an introduction, and end with a summary conclusion. Follow standard footnote format for the humanities. Always include a list of Works Cited (i.e., a bibliography). If you are unaware of these standards, I recommend you investigate the latest edition of “The Short Cut” from Luther Seminary (online at the Library web page). This is based on the “Chicago style.”

ATTENDANCE & MAKE-UP POLICIES

Attendance

Being there is a major part of any seminar. If you miss even one class (without redemption) your grade for attendance will be Marginal. You will Fail your attendance in this class if you miss two or more days of class session. Please see me ASAP if must miss class for whatever reason. There is no distinction made between excused and unexcused absences. *All* absences (even “excused” ones) count against your grade, *unless they are redeemed.*

Redemption of Missed Classes

You can redeem your attendance points for one missed day of class by turning in a typed summary (2–3 pages) of the required reading for the day that you missed. You will be graded Pass/Fail on these summaries. Redemption will return your attendance grade to full points. There is no redemption for days missed where you were supposed to summarize the readings for us all — you will have to trade that day with someone else.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Assigned Readings
Sept 13	G. Forde, <i>On Being a Theologian of the Cross</i> (all) <i>Read before class, or at least skim it in the library</i>
Sept 20	D. Thompson, <i>Crossing the Divide</i> (All)
Sept 27	T. Mannermaa, <i>Christ Present in Faith</i>

	W. Pannenberg, "The Theology of the Cross" from <i>Word and World</i> 8 (1988), 162-172 or online at: www.luthersem.edu/word&world
Oct 4	Jenson, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 1:part III = 165-236.
Oct 11	Pannenberg, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 2: 297-396
Oct 18	Jüngel, <i>God as the Mystery of the World</i> , ch. 5; "My Theology" from <i>Theological Essays</i> , II.
Final Exam Day	Oral Report on term papers; typed summary/abstract due in class.