SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

STMA 504. GOD, CREATION, AND TRINITY

Spring Quarter 2007
wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.
Pigott 307

Marty Folsom, Ph.D.
425-343-4494

e-mail: folsomm@seattleu.edu
drtrinity@comcast.net

Office Hours by Appointment: call 425-343-4494

Syllabus

I. Course Description

Examines Christian understandings of God and God's relationship to the world, including the doctrine of the Trinity. Specific topics of discussion may include: the nature of God; God as mystery; God's love and God's power; divine transcendence and immanence; God as creator, liberator, and sustainer of all; models of God's relationship to the world; God and evil; sources, opportunities, and limits of Trinitarian language. Culturally and theologically diverse materials will be considered.

II. S.T.M. Competencies Addressed in this Course

This course primarily addresses the "theological" competencies put forward for the M.Div. degree, especially those listed in section IB:

An ability to reflect theologically on the basic themes of the Christian tradition.

1. A knowledge of the central doctrines of the Christian tradition and various theological expression of those doctrines, including multicultural and ecumenical.
2. An understanding of the interaction of religion and culture diachronically and synchronically within dogmatic and systematic reflection in the Christian tradition.
3. Ability to interpret the tradition for the present (hermeneutics).
4. Ability to reflect on one's own theological method, to contrast it with other methods, and the ability to enable a community to reflect theologically.
5. Ability to integrate theology with pastoral practice.

Secondarily, competencies in Scripture (IA 1, 2, and 4) are also addressed.

III. Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are for each student:

1) to listen deeply and attentively to the wisdom of the Western religious and philosophical traditions concerning God (the gods/the divine), thereby gaining a solid and useful understanding of the following concepts/themes – the nature, existence, and goodness of God; God and history; human belief in God; God as personal;

2) to engage actively and openly the approach of several representative contemporary theologians (Sallie McFague and Colin Gunton) and their ways of imaging and thinking God, thereby arriving at a solid and useful understanding of problematic aspects of traditional Western views of God, as well as alternatives to these views;

3) to wrestle critically and empathetically with the co-presence within Christianity of experience/talk/thought of God as both <u>one</u> and <u>three</u>, thereby developing a solid and useful understanding of the sources, functions, and limits of both monotheistic and Trinitarian concepts and images;

4) to recognize and embrace the historically and culturally conditioned character of <u>all</u> human perceptions, images, and concepts of God;

5) to develop greater facility in oral and written communication, in theological reflection, and in the integration of theology, spirituality, and ministerial practice;

6) to develop a heightened sensitivity to the difference gender makes (and does not make) in human experience, and to the ways race, class, and culture deepen and complicate accounts of human experience;

7) to develop an appreciation for the rich vitality of human experiences of God, as well as for the ways in which God remains always beyond the powers of human imagination and conception.

IV. Texts

<u>Books</u>:

The Forgotten *Trinity: 1 The Report of the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today.* London: The British Council of Churches, 1989.

Gunton, Colin. *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

McFague, Sallie. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987.

Ward, Keith. *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002.

<u>Films</u>:

To be chosen by student for reflection paper #2

<u>Articles and Chapters from Books</u> <u>(in the order in which they are assigned):</u>

1. Hardy, Daniel. "The Future of Theology in a Complex World," in *Christ and Context*, ed. by Hilary Regan and Alan Torrance. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, pp. 21-42.

2. Zizioulas, John. “Introduction” and “From Mask to Person: The Birth of an Ontology of Personhood,” in *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church.* Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997, pp. 15-65.

3. LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. “God In Communion with Us: The Trinity,” in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: Harper, 1993, pp. 83-114.

4. Rahner, Karl. “The Method and Structure of the Treatise ‘On the Triune God,’” in *The Trinity*, trans. by Joseph Doncell. New York: Crossroad, 2002, pp. 9-33.

5. Boff, Leonardo. “Trinity,” in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. by Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993, pp. 389-404.

6. Richard, Pablo. “Theology in the Theology of Liberation,” in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. by Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993, pp. 150-168.

7. Daly, Mary. “After the Death of God the Father,” in *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973, pp. 13-43.

8. Grenz, Stanley J. *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001, pp. 23-57.

9. Taylor, Mark Lloyd. “The Love of God, Theology, and Human Liberation,” in *God Is Love: A Study in the Theology of Karl Rahner*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986, pp. 389-408.

10. McFague, Sallie. “A Brief Credo,” in *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, pp. 3-24.

A course reader, for sale at SUperCopy, includes all items, 1-10.

V. Procedures and Assignments

A. Attendance. Class sessions are the primary means by which the instructor and students can share the material introduced in the assigned texts and other activities. Therefore, attendance at all sessions of the course is essential.

B. Reading, Preparation for Class Sessions, and In-Class Participation. Each student is responsible to read the material assigned for each session of the course in preparation to discuss their reading in class. A journal which notes key points, questions, reflections on implications, and disagreements will be turned in at the last session. Each student is also responsible to actively participate in class sessions. Activities will include lectures, large group discussions, and small group work.

C. Gathering/Closing Prayer Leadership. Each student will take leadership for a brief athering or closing prayer for one of the sessions of the course. Additional guidelines will be provided. These are to provide a voice for those whose voice is often not heard: God, creation, the marginalized, strangers, the fearful, and the excluded. They are to be theologically thoughtful and imaginatively prophetic.

D. Small Group Discussion Leadership. Each student will lead a small group (3 or 4 students) in a discussion of issues emerging from the reading assignment for one of the sessions of the course. Additional guidelines will be provided.

E. Papers. Each student will write three papers on assigned topics.

Paper #1 will involve a comparison and contrast of materials from Keith Ward's book, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, and Colin Gunton's book, *The Triune Creator,* and is due at 9 am on Wednesday, April 18.

Paper #2 will involve an assessment of 1 to 3 movies of the student's choice. The paper will wrestle with the implicit theologies and human response or experience, especially noting the use of metaphor to image God and God's involvement with creation. This paper is due at 9 am on Wednesday, May 23.

Paper #3, due at 9 am on Wednesday, May 31, will serve to integrate course materials with the student's own experience and theological reflection. A beginning of the course statement (1-2 pages), to be submitted at 9 am on Wednesday, April 4, will describe the student's current beliefs regarding God's nature, trinitarian character, and relation to the created order. This statement will contribute to the final reflections of Paper #3. Additional guidelines will be provided.

VI. Computation of Final Grade

Paper #1	25%
Paper #2	25%
Paper #3	25%
Reading Journal	10%
Class Preparation and Participation, Prayer Leadership, and Small Group Leadership	15%

Successful completion of the five factors listed above yields a **B** grade. Superior achievement in one or more of these areas notches the grade upward. Outstanding achievement in all four areas earns an **A** grade.

VII. Schedule of Class Sessions and Assignments

A. Getting Acquainted and Getting Oriented

March 29 – Introductions and Course Organization
"Theology of Origin" Exercise
Theological Thinking: spectrums, apperceptions, and kaleidoscopic views
The Myth of Certainty, the possibility of confidence

B. God-talk in Historical Formation

April 4 – Theological Language and Issues
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Daniel Hardy, *The Future of Theology*… pp. 21-42
Sallie McFague, *Models of God*, pp. ix-xv, 1-57
Colin Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 1-13
Statement due (see Paper #3)

April 11 – An Early History of God Lingers On
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 1-35
Colin Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 14-40

April 18 – Early Church and Eastern Orthodox Theology: Mystery and Personhood
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 36-66
John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* pp. 15-65
Colin Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 41-92.
Paper #1 due

C. Imaging and Thinking God Today

April 25 – Catholic Theology
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 67-136
Catherine Mowry LaCugna, "God in Communion with Us,"
in *Freeing Theology*, pp. 83-114
Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 9-33
Colin Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 97-145

May 2 – Liberation Theologies
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 179-218
Leonardo Boff, "Trinity" (Course Reader, 93-102)
Pablo Richard, "Theology in the Theology of Liberation" (Course Reader, 63-73)

May 3 – Feminist Theologies
Read and be prepared to discuss
Mary Daly, "After the Death of God the Father" (Course Reader, 75-91)
Sallie McFague, *Models of God*, pp. ix-xv, 1-87

May 16 – Trinitarian Revival
Read and be prepared to discuss:
The Forgotten Trinity
Colin Gunton, *Triune Creator*, pp.146-192
Stan Grenz, *The Social God*, pp. 23-57
Paper #2 due

D. God & Ministry

May 23 – God and the Church for Creation & Culture
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 219-254
Taylor, Mark Lloyd. "The Love of God…" pp. 389-408

May 30 – God and the Person in Transformation
Read and be prepared to discuss:
Gunton, *Triune Creator*, pp.193-236
Sallie McFague. "A Brief Credo…" pp. 3-24
Paper #3 due

VII. Recommended Reading

Anderson, R.S. Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God: A Christological Critique. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975.

Ayres, Lewis. Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. Credo: Meditations on the Apostles' Creed. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000.

_____. Explorations in Theology: The Word Made Flesh. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989.

Barth, Karl. Anselm, Fides Quaerens Intellectum: Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme. Pickwick Publications,1960.

_____. Church Dogmatics. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960.

Bevans, Stephen B. Models of Contextual Theology. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

Bobrinskoy, Boris. The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999.

Boff, Leonardo. Introducing Liberation Theology. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.

_____. Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978.

_____. The Maternal Face of God: The Feminine and Its Religious Expressions. San Francisco, CA: Harpercollins, 1987.

_____. Trinity and Society. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Christ the Center. HarperSanFrancisco, 1978.

Bonino, Jose Miguez. Faces of Latin American Protestantism: 1993 Carnahan Lectures. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

Braaten, Carl E., ed. A Map of Twentieth-Century Theology: Readings from Karl Barth to Radical Pluralism. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1995.

Buber, M. I and Thou. New York: Scribner's, 1970.

Chirban, John T., ed. Personhood: Orthodox Christianity and the Connection Between Body, Mind, and Soul. Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey, 1996.

Churches, British Council of. Forgotten Trinity: Selection of Papers Presented to the BCC. 1992.

_____. Forgotten Trinity: Study Guide on Issues Contained in the Report of the Commission. 1989

College, King's. Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.

Collins, Paul M. Trinitarian Theology: West and East. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Colyer, Elmer M. The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialog with T. F. Torrance. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Cunningham, David S. These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

D'Costa, Gavin. The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

Davis, Stephen T., ed. The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Deddo, G. W. Karl Barth's Theology of Relations: Trinitarian, Christological and Human: Towards an Ethic of the Family. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.

Downey, Michael. Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000

Doyle, Dennis. Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

Due, William J. The Trinity Guide to the Trinity. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003.

Dyk, Leanne Van. A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

Edwards, Denis. The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology. New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

Fiddes, Paul S. Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Finger, Thomas N. Self, Earth and Society: Alienation and Trinitarian Transformation. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Fiorenza, Francis Schussler. Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1991.

Fox, Patricia A. God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier Books, 2001.

Grenz, Stanley J. Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

_____. Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2004.

_____. The Named God and the Question of Being: A Trinitarian Theo-Ontology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Gunton, Colin E. The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2001.

_____. The One, the Three, and the Many. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Hunt, Anne. Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of Christian Faith. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

_____. What Are They Saying About the Trinity? New York: Paulist Press, 1998.

Jenson, Robert W. The Triune Identity: God According to the Gospel. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982.

_____. The Triune God. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1992.

Johnson, William Stacy. The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

Jungel, Eberhard. God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth – A Paraphrase. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.

Kimel, Alvin F., ed. Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992.

Lacugna, Catherine M. God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life. HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Letham, Robert. The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004.

Leupp, Roderick T. Knowing the Name of God: A Trinitarian Tapestry of Grace, Faith & Community. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Lorenzen, Lynne Faber. The College Student's Introduction to the Trinity. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier Books, 1999,

Macmurray, J. The Clue to History. London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1938.

_____. Interpreting the Universe. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Incorporated, 1996.

_____. Macmurray, J. The Search for Reality in Religion. Quaker Home Service, 1998.

Maloney, George A. Abiding in the Indwelling Trinity. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004.

McPartlan, Paul. The Eucharist Makes the Church. T & T Clark, 1994.

Meeks, M. Douglas, ed. Trinity, Community, and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wesleyan Theology. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Metzger, Paul Louis, ed. Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

Miell, David. Barth on Persons in Relationship: A Case for Further Reflection? Scottish Journal of Theology, 42 (1989): 541-555.

Molnar, Paul D. Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology. New York: T & T Clark, 2005.

Moltmann, Jurgen. God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1999.

_____. The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993.

Morris, Thomas V. Our Idea of God. Regent College Publishing, 1997.

Newbigin, Lesslie. Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

_____. Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

_____. The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

O'Collins, Gerald. The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity. New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

Papanikolaou, Aristotle. Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Peters, Ted. God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

_____. God: The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2000.

Polanyi, M. Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Powell, Samuel M. Participating in God: Creation and Trinity. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2003.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. Sexism and God-Talk. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.

Schrein, Shannon. Quilting and Braiding: The Feminist Christologies of Sallie McFague and Elizabeth A. Johnson in Conversation. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998.

Schwobel, Christopher, ed. Trinitarian Theology: Essays on Divine Being and Act. T & T Clark, 1995.

Seamands, Stephen. Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Seitz, Christopher R., ed. Nicene Christianity: The Future for a New Ecumenism. Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press, 2001.

Smail, Thomas Allan. The Forgotten Father. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980.

_____. Like Father, Like Son: The Trinity Imaged in Our Humanity. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.

Sponheim, Paul R. Faith and the Other: A Relational Theology. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.

Taylor, Daniel. The Myth of Certainty: The Reflective Christian & the Risk of Commitment. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Thompson, John. Modern Trinitarian Perspectives. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Toon. One God in Trinity. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1980.

Torrance, Alan J. Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation. T & T Clark, 1996.

Torrance, James B. Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Torrance, Thomas Forsyth. The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons. New York: T & T Clark, 2002.

_____. The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church. T & T Clark, 1993.

Turek, Margaret M. Towards a Theology of God the Father: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theodramatic Approach. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001.

Turner, Harold. Frames of Mind: A Public Philosophy for Religion and Cultures. Deep Sight Publishing, 2001.

Ury, William. Trinitarian Personhood: Investigating the Implications of a Relational Definition. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. First Theology: God, Scriptures & Hermeneutics. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

_____, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

_____, ed. The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Essays on Culture and Religion, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

Volf, Miroslav. After Our Likeness: The Church As the Image of the Trinity. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

_____. Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

_____. God's Life in Trinity. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006.

Ward, Graham, ed. Companion to Postmodern Theology. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2004.

_____. The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 1997.

Ward, Keith. Christianity. Oneworld Publications, 2000.

_____. The Living God. London: SPCK, 1984.

Webb, Stephen H. The Gifting God: A Trinitarian Ethics of Excess. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Zimmerman, Jens. Recovering Theological Hermeneutics: An Incarnational-Trinitarian Theory of Interpretation. Grand Rapids, MN: Baker Academic, 2004.

Zizioulas, John. Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church. T & T Clark, 2007.