

STMM 501 -- CHRISTOLOGY
Spring 2006

School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
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Seattle, WA 98122-1090

<u>Professor:</u>	Dr. Donna Teevan	<u>Class time:</u>	Mon., 9:00-11:50
<u>Office:</u>	Casey 221 / 296-5334	<u>Class location:</u>	114 Garrand
<u>E-Mail:</u>	dteevan@seattleu.edu	<u>Credits:</u>	3
<u>Office Hours:</u>	Mon., 1:30-2:30 and by appointment	<u>Prerequisite:</u>	STMM 500

COURSE DESCRIPTION FROM THE GRADUATE BULLETIN

A survey of theological reflection on Jesus of Nazareth, his life, his teaching, his death, and resurrection. The course examines the New Testament, early Christian theologians, the important conciliar definitions, the scholastic synthesis, and contemporary discussion. It covers three main questions: Who is Jesus? How does Jesus save us? How do we relate to Jesus?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- (1) to explore the method and content of what contemporary biblical scholars are saying about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus;
- (2) to understand the processes of theological reflection that have led to Christian beliefs about Jesus' identity and significance, especially those leading to the councils of Nicea and Chalcedon;
- (3) to understand the different ways in which Christians have understood the meaning of salvation and to consider the implications of these understandings for today's world, both in the everyday life of the Christian and in relation to interreligious dialogue;
- (4) to consider the impact of race, gender, and culture on interpretations of Jesus and the experience of salvation;
- (5) to reflect upon some of the images of Jesus that have been central to the historical development of Christology and that currently enliven the relationship between Christians and Jesus;
- (6) to consider the connection between Christian living and Christology;
- (7) to reflect upon the pastoral implications of our study.

STM COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED OR FURTHER DEVELOPED IN THIS COURSE

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

- A knowledge of the central doctrines of the Christian tradition and various theological expressions of those doctrines in the areas of theological anthropology, sin, grace and Christology. This knowledge includes multicultural and ecumenical contributions.
- An understanding of the interaction of religion and culture diachronically (in various historical periods) and synchronically (patterns of reflection in any one historical period) within dogmatic and systematic reflection in the Christian tradition.
- The ability to interpret the tradition for the present pastoral life of the Church.
- An ability to reflect theologically on one's pastoral ministry within a culturally diverse context.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- the Bible (any modern translation)
- Borg, Marcus. *Jesus a New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship*. Harper, 1987.
- Crysedale, Cynthia. *Embracing Travail: Retrieving the Cross Today*. Continuum, 1999.
- Johnson, Elizabeth. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*. Crossroad, 1990.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Jesus through the Centuries*. Harper and Row, 1985.
- Rausch, Thomas. *Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Christology*. Liturgical Press, 2003.
- Sobrino, Jon. *Jesus the Liberator*. Orbis, 1999.

EVALUATION

(1) Participation	20 %
(2) Reflection Paper 1	25 %
(3) Reflection Paper 2	25 %
(4) Integrative Paper	30 %

(1) **Participation** -- Your participation in this course is vital to your own learning and to the experience of everyone involved in the class. The essentials of solid participation include regular attendance, daily preparation of readings, active involvement in class discussions and group work, and the posing of thoughtful questions. Attendance is obviously an important aspect of participation and missed classes will lower your grade. If you do need to miss a class due to illness, additional work may be required to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course. Elsewhere in this syllabus, I have provided a more detailed set of criteria for the participation grade.

(2) and (3) **Reflection Papers** -- These two papers are to be 3 pages each. (You may “spill over” to page 4, but do not go beyond that; brevity, with its requisite focus, is crucial to the assignment.) These papers offer an opportunity to reflect more deeply on class discussions and readings as well as on the evolution of your own christological thinking. Papers must be typed (double-spaced).

- **Reflection Paper 1– “Who do you say that I am?”**

This paper gives you the opportunity to formulate your initial approach to Christology. As you begin this course, what is your understanding of Jesus’ identity and significance? You might consider some of the following questions (not all of them, of course): What are the key issues in Christology, as you see it? How have your experiences in life influenced your images of Jesus? How has your work in ministry been shaped by your understanding of Jesus, and in what ways has your ministerial experience called you to reformulate your sense of Jesus’ identity and meaning? To what extent have church teachings had an impact on your understanding of Jesus? How have artistic images of Jesus affected your view of him? How does worship inform your Christology? What theologians have influenced you on Christological issues? How can an academic, scholarly study of Christology enhance one’s ministry? What are your most burning Christological questions?

- **Reflection Paper 2– “How my mind is changing.”**

Christian Century has had a series entitled “How My Mind Has Changed” in which prominent theologians would discuss how their theological thinking has changed over the course of their careers. Fortunately, your assignment is more modest: you are to reflect upon how your Christological thinking has changed over the last few *weeks*. I have called this paper “how my mind *is changing*” because I envision the type of changes taking place as part of an

ongoing process. An “A” paper will be one that clearly sets out the issues you are thinking about and that explicitly and effectively engages course materials. This paper needs to be well organized and sharp in delineating the issues and questions that have arisen for you. The focus of this paper, in contrast to the first reflection paper, is on course content and not on personal narrative.

(4) **Integrative Paper** – An 8-10 page paper that presents and explores central Christological themes is to be submitted shortly after the last class. The purpose of this assignment is not to summarize the course but to come to an articulation of key themes in Christology, as identified by the authors we have studied, and to come to one’s own position. This paper, first of all, must demonstrate an *accurate understanding* of the material studied in this course because without this understanding the dialogical, integrative function of this paper will not be truly operative. Please note as well that this paper is *not* a reflection paper and will thus require the conventions of more formal academic writing, including proper citations of sources.

COURSE POLICIES AND REMINDERS

Assistance -- I urge you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the course. I am readily available, so please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty–The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy Concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook.

Students with Disabilities–If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740.

Late Work -- Late papers should be brought to me in my office, slipped under my office door, or placed in my box at the Theology & Religious Studies Dept. They may also be e-mailed to me as an attachment, but you need to be sure that I can open it. (I have a PC with the standard Microsoft package, so usually this works out fine, but there’s always an exception....) Papers more than 3 days late will not be accepted without prior authorization from me, which will be based on a conclusion that extenuating circumstances necessitate an extension..

Attendance -- As indicated in the explanation of the participation grade, there is a penalty for excessive absences. If you do have to miss class for some reason, remember that you are responsible for finding out what happened in that class. Check with me about additional work that may be required.

Grading – A reminder: The evaluation of your work is based on demonstrated performance, not effort. An “A” grade in the course signifies outstanding performance, not simply completion of the assignments or commitment to the course. A “B” indicates that the required work was done and that it was accurate and complete. A “C” suggests that the work was adequate but that there were some difficulties or gaps in understanding or skill.

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A	95-100	Superior performance
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	Good performance
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	Adequate performance
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	
D	63-66	Poor performance
D-	60-62	

PARTICIPATION GRADE CRITERIA

Characteristics of participation at each grade level:

A -- (Superior Performance) These class members demonstrate thoughtful involvement in the course. They are prepared for every class. They have done a close reading of the assigned texts and have questions or comments on the readings which contribute to class discussion. They are engaged and respectful participants in class discussion. Their remarks in class are usually well focused and tend to assist their classmates in understanding the subject matter; they are leaders. They express original ideas related to the topics discussed or make creative connections between ideas. Overall, the class is greatly enriched by their presence. Their contributions are valuable because of their quality rather than their quantity.

B -- (Good Performance) Participants at this level have done the assigned readings for every class day. They have not prepared for class as extensively as the A level participants have, however; they have fewer ideas or questions prepared prior to the class. They are frequent contributors to class discussions and are respectful of their classmates. They occasionally share original insights or make creative connections. Overall, the class is better because they are there.

C -- (Adequate Performance) Class members at this level are clearly unprepared for class on some occasions. When they are prepared for class, they frequently participate in the discussion. The quality of their contributions tends to be uneven or, for the most part, basically accurate but not especially perceptive. Overall, they do contribute something to the class but could contribute much more.

D -- (Below Average Performance) Participants at this level are frequently unprepared for class and do not contribute to class discussions regularly. They do not demonstrate commitment to the course or to the learning experience of their classmates.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, TOPICS, AND READINGS

Please note: This schedule is tentative. I do not anticipate that there will be any changes, but if there are I will announce any modifications in the schedule in advance. Readings are to be prepared in advance of the class date listed. I recommend that you read them in the order in which they are listed.

Getting Underway

1. Mon., March 27 Topics: Introductions to each other and to the course
Introduction to Current Sources and Methods in Christology

Biblical Sources and Their Contemporary Interpretations

2. Mon., April 3 Topic: The Quest for the Historical Jesus

Reflection Paper 1 Due

Readings:
The Gospel of Mark
Rausch, *Who Is Jesus?*, pp. 1-40
3. Mon., April 10 Topic: The Life and Ministry of Jesus

Readings:
Marcus Borg, *Jesus A New Vision*
Rausch, pp. 41-93
4. Mon., April 17 Topic: The Life and Ministry of Jesus (continued)

Readings:
Elizabeth Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, pp. 67-111
Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, pp. 1-10; 23-35; 67-104
5. Mon., April 24 Topic: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Readings:
Rausch, pp. 95-124
Johnson, pp. 115-127
Sobrino, pp. 195-211; 219-271

From the New Testament to Chalcedon and Beyond

6. Mon., May 1 Topic: Christologies from the New Testament to the Early Councils

Readings:
Rausch, pp. 125-164
Johnson, pp. 19-65

7. Mon., May 8 Topic: Jesus through the Centuries

Reflection Paper 2 Due

Readings:

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries:*
The Cosmic Christ, pp. 57-70
The Son of Man, pp. 71-82
Christ Crucified, pp. 95-108
Mirror of the Eternal, pp. 157-181
Teacher of Common Sense, pp. 182-193

A Closer Look at Soteriology

8. Mon., May 15 Topic: The Cross

Readings:

Rausch, pp. 165-204
Johnson, pp. 115-127

9. Mon., May 22 Topic: Contemporary Issues in Soteriology

Readings:

(On reserve) Delores Williams, in *Sisters in the Wilderness*, pp. 161-170
(On reserve) Selections from Edward Schillebeeckx
Johnson, pp. 129-146
(On reserve) Karl Rahner,
“Christology Within an Evolutionary View of the World,” pp. 166-172,
“Anonymous Christians,” pp. 214,
“Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions,” pp. 214-220
“Atheism and Implicit Christianity,” pp. 220-224, *A Rahner Reader*.

Mon., May 29–No Classes–Memorial Day Holiday

10. Mon., June 5 Topic: Personal and Pastoral Appropriations

Reading:

Cynthia Crysdale, *Embracing Travail*

Wednesday, June 7 Integrative Paper Due