STMM 501: CHRISTOLOGY
Winter 2014 Friday 9:00-11-50
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Hunthausen 213
Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
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, and contemporary discussion. It covers three main questions: Who is Jesus? How does Jesus save us? What did Jesus teach and do during the time of his ministry?

GOALS OF THE COURSE
MAPS Students will give evidence of:

• Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian Tradition.
• Knowledge of the interaction of religious/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical and multicultural dimensions.
• Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others.
• Ability to lead from spiritual depth toward practice for justice and wholeness in the world.
• Ability to articulate one's relationship with God, as it is informed by theological reflection in one's social context.
• Ability to articulate and live from an understanding of self as human, minister, and leader.

By the end of the course students should:

- have a basic sense of the scriptural and dogmatic teachings of the Church which deal with Christology.
- have a basic sense of the development of theological reflection upon the presentation of Jesus in the New Testament and the Christian tradition.
- be conversant with the basic issues and approaches modern theology has taken in Christology.
- be able to reflect on the pastoral implications of these issues and approaches.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS
Lectures, class discussion, and short papers.

TEXTBOOKS
O'Collins, G., Interpreting Jesus, Reprint through Wipf and Stock, Publishers.

Weaver, J. Denny, The Nonviolent Atonement, Eerdmans.

Borg, Marcus, Jesus, A New Vision, Harper.

One of many possible views of the historical Jesus. This text should be read in connection with the issue of the historical Jesus.

McMahon, Christopher, Jesus Our Salvation, St. Mary's Press.

COURSE OUTLINE

The readings listed for each class session are those that are to be done for that class session.

Session 1: January 10

Introduction

Pluralism in Christology

Images of Jesus

From our own experience

From the world of art

From the scriptures, especially the Hebrew Scriptures

No reading assigned before the first class session

Session 2: January 17

Finish the overview of images from the Hebrew Scriptures used by early Christian thought

A quick survey of the New Testament Christologies of the gospels

Readings: Mark 1, Matthew 1 and 2, Luke 1 and 2, John 1.

Each of the gospels sets up is key images of Jesus quickly in its opening chapters. Read these selection and try to get some sense of how the various gospels differ in the fundamental images they use to present Jesus.

McMahon, chapter 4

Read this after you have tried getting the images from the gospels on your own. McMahon gives a quick overview of what each of the gospels is doing in its presentation of Jesus. What are the practical implications for ministry each of these presentations open up?

Session 3: January 24

We will finish up our treatment of the Christologies of the New Testament.

And we will begin to look at the Historical Jesus

Readings: O'Collins, chapter 2; McMahon, chapters 1 and 2.

Read at least O'Collins for this week. We will be covering this topic for a couple of weeks so the reading can be spread out a bit.

Some key questions as you read:

Why is there a problem getting back to the historical Jesus?

How do the authors propose to deal with the problem so that they might say something about the historical Jesus? What criteria do they propose for handling passages in the gospels to see if they bear historical content or not?

What are the key elements in each of their presentations of the historical Jesus?

Session 4: January 31
Continuation of the discussion of the historical Jesus.
Readings: finish those listed for session 4.
You might begin reading Borg.

Session 5: February 7
Continuation of the discussion of the historical Jesus.
Readings: All of Borg's book.
We read Borg as one example of a Christology rooted in the approach to Jesus through his ministry and teaching. Key questions:
Why does Borg take this approach (through the historical Jesus)? How much ink does he give to the cross and resurrection or the doctrines regarding Jesus' natures? Why so little?
What is the central metaphor or image Borg uses in his approach to Jesus?
What is Jesus ministry about? What are its central features according to Borg?

Session 6: February 14
Finish the discussion of Borg.

Move on to the 2nd major approach to Christology: the path through Jesus death and resurrection, i.e. Jesus as Saviour.
Readings: O'Collins, chapters 3, 4 and 5, MaMahon, chapters 3, 6 and 7.
I would begin with O'Collins and then move on to McMahon. We will continue this discussion is the 7th session, so you need not get it all done for this week.
Key questions in reading both of them:
What historical issues surround the death and the resurrection of Jesus?
What do we need to be saved from?
How are we saved?
Is the cross the only saving act of Jesus?
Does the resurrection play a role?
Is anything else Jesus did salvific?
3 major approaches to soteriology (how we are saved by Jesus).

Session 7: February 21
Continuation of the discussion of the topics of the 5th session, so see the materials above.
If we have time, we will begin to look at Weaver's book. So you might want to begin reading the first 3 chapters.
Key questions for Weaver:
Why does he object to the usual Christian view of the Atonement (that of St. Anselm)?
How does he handle scripture passages that we tend to read through the lens of Anselm's view of the atonement?

How does he think we are saved by Jesus?

Session 8: February 28

Continuation of the discussion of Weaver's position in the first 3 chapters of his book.
Finish reading his book and be ready to discuss

Black soteriologies
Feminist soteriologies
And Womanist soteriologies

What problems do each of these have with the usual theories of atonement?
How do they describe the saving work of Jesus?

Session 9: March 7

We move on to the third major theological approach to Christology, that taken through the question of the natures of Jesus as divine and human.
Readings: McMahon, chapter 5.
O'Collins, chapter 6.
We will begin by looking at the development of Christology in the early centuries of the Church. McMahon gives a good short account of these early developments. We will look at them to see how Christian reflection on Jesus developed to the point of the dogmatic teachings of the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. Key questions:

What were the issues the Church struggled with in the development of thought leading up to each of these councils?
What were the key steps taken forward in the development of the Church's reflection?
What exactly did each council teach about Jesus?

Session 10: March 14

Complete our discussion of the historical developments in the early church.
How does theology deal with these issues today—how do we interpret the councils?

O'Collins, chapter 6. is especially helpful here.
Key questions in reading O'Collins and in our own thought:

What does it mean to be human: what does it mean to say that Jesus is human?
What does it mean to be God: what is the divine nature and what are we saying about Jesus when we apply divinity to him?
How do humanity and divinity come together in Jesus?
Why is the notion of person a problem here?

Jesus and the world religions: McMahon, chapter 8.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. the assigned readings;
2. class discussion;
3. written assignments:

1. Take a story that is found in at least two of the gospels. Compare how two of the gospels tell that story. You will want to address the following questions:

what is the overriding image or images of Jesus that shape each of the two gospels;
what evidence can you point to in each of the two gospels that supports the claim that those are the key images of Jesus in those gospels;
how do those key images in each of the two gospels shape how the same story is told differently in each of the two gospels?

This paper is due at the beginning of the 3rd class session on January 24. It should be about 1000 words in length (3 pages).

2. Write a short paper that summarizes what you think are the two or three key elements in the teaching and ministry of Jesus. How are these elements related to one another? To what evidence in the Christian Scriptures would you point to support your position? How do they fit the criteria used by historians to find the historical Jesus?

This paper is due at the beginning of the 6th class session on February 14. It should be about 1200 words in length (4 pages).

3. Write a paper on ***one of the two*** following topics:

A. The Salvific Work of Jesus

From the earliest days of the Christian faith there has been a wide and varied discussion of how we have been saved by Jesus. Read one of the following significant theologians (Irenaeus, Augustine, Anslem, Luther, Calvin, Aquinas, Johnson, Barth, Tillich, James Cone or Rahner) who has written on this topic and write a paper in which in conversation with this theologian you develop your ideas about how Jesus has saved us. Explain how your view of salvation shapes your understanding and approach to ministry and your view of the mission of the Church.

Some suggestive questions which you **may or may not** want to address:

From what do we need to be saved?
Is the resurrection integral to the work of salvation or not?
What is the connection between the salvific work in Jesus' death (and resurrection???) and the work of his ministry?

B. The Natures of Jesus

From it earliest days the Christian faith has been marked by deep debates over the divinity and humanity of Jesus and how those two natures are related to one another. Read one of the following significant theologians (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Johnson, Rahner, Barth, James Cone or Tillich) who has written on this topic and write a paper in which in conversation with this

theologian you develop your ideas about what it means to say that Jesus is God incarnate in human nature. Explain how your view of the natures of Jesus shapes your own ministry and the mission of the Church.

Some suggestive topics which you **<u>may or may not</u>** want to address:

Explain the dogmatic statements of the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon.
What does it mean to say Jesus is human?
What does it mean to say Jesus is divine?
What is the connection between the two natures?
What is the importance of each nature in Jesus' ministry and the work of salvation?

This paper is due at the beginning of the last class session on March 14. It should be about 2500 words in length (7-10 pages).

<u>General norms for papers</u>

1. All papers should follow a standard manual of style. Please follow the required S.T.M. writing guide: Lynn Quitman Troyka and Douglas Hesse, *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle Brook, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009).
2. Footnotes rather than endnotes make it easier to grade the paper. A bibliography of the reading you did for the paper should be included at the end.
3. Papers are to be <u>double spaced and paginated.</u>
4. Hand papers in stapled in the upper left hand corner—i.e. no plastic binders.
5. Keep a copy of your paper (In case the bird eats it).

Some keys to writing a good paper:

1) advance a thesis – a basic point – that is easily identifiable, plausible, novel, compelling, insightful, and crystal clear [see Part One, Chapter 2 of *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*];

2) display a structure or organization of materials that is solid, evident, understandable, and appropriate to your thesis – in particular, transitions from point to point must be smooth, each paragraph must have its own topic sentence, and all paragraphs must somehow advance your thesis [see Part One, Chapter 3 of *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*];

3) make use of appropriate evidence to support your points – do not just make assertions, but offer your reader reasons why s/he should accept your assertions and, thereby, embrace your thesis (such evidence may come from other texts and artifacts, judiciously selected, as well as your own experience, carefully articulated) [see Part One, Chapters 4 and 5 of *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*];

4) reflect sound argumentation – all ideas should flow together smoothly, you might anticipate and answer counterarguments to your thesis, as well as making novel connections to other experiences and ideas [see Part One, Chapters 4 and 5 of *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*];

5) demonstrate good mechanics – sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, style of citation of sources, and spelling [see Parts Two through Five of *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*, as needed, and make consistent use of one of the three style guides (MLA, APA, or Chicago) provided in Part Five, Chapters 34-36].

GRADING

Class participation: 10%
First paper: 25%
Second paper: 25%
Final paper: 40%

Christology

SCORING RUBRIC TEMPLATE

Introduction			
• Explains the theological problem to be addressed • Helps reader understand the nature of the problem—reader understands what is at issue • States your purpose and provides a map or blueprint forecasting the structure of your paper	Meets all criteria at high level; clearly presents problem	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in development	Meets few criteria; fails to orient reader to problem
Summary of Theologian's Position			
• Shows how your chosen theologian answers the question posed in your introduction • Clearly summarizes the theologian's position and argument • Uses appropriate sources; treats them with fairness and balance • Shows a clear understanding of the position and the arguments of the chosen theologian	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, balanced, accurate	Meets some criteria; uneven; some lapses in clarity balance, or accuracy	Meets few criteria; often unclear, undeveloped, inaccurate
Presentation of Your Own Position			
• Clearly develops your own ideas in the light of the theologian's position • Has a clear thesis • Has effective arguments to support the thesis; arguments are clear and well developed • Shows appropriate complexity of thought and wrestling with the theological issue	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, strong development, good sense of complexity	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development; less complex	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped, or too superficial or thin
Explanation of Ministerial Implications			
• Demonstrates the significance of the issue for ministry; shows what is at stake • Shows clear idea of how the positions taken in the paper shape an understanding of ministry and the mission of the Church	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
Overall Clarity of Organization			
• Has a well-organized, easy-to-follow structure • Has effective paragraphing; each paragraph develops one idea clearly • Connects paragraphs to one another in a logical and understandable way with effective transitions • Is unified around a central thesis and develops that thesis clearly in all its parts	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
Effective Sentence Style and Mechanics			
• Is well-edited without errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling • Has a clear, concise, readable style • Properly formats, punctuates, and cites quotations, paraphrases, and summaries of other authors' ideas.	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Honesty

From **SEATTLE UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Introduction

Seattle University is committed to the principle that academic honesty and integrity are important values in the educational process. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense against the academic community. Acts of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the Academic Honesty Policy.1

Standards of Conduct

Without regard to motive, student conduct that is academically dishonest, evidences lack of academic integrity or trustworthiness, or unfairly impinges upon the rights and privileges of
others is prohibited. A non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct includes:

A. Committing Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the work or intellectual property of other persons, published or unpublished, presented as one's own work. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to copying, paraphrasing, summarizing, or borrowing ideas, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or an entire paper from another person's work without proper reference and/or acknowledgement. While different academic disciplines have different modes for attributing credit, all recognize and value the contributions of individuals to the general corpus of knowledge and expertise. Students are responsible for educating themselves as to the proper mode of
attributing credit in any course or field. Note that plagiarism can be said to have occurred without any affirmative showing that a student's use of another's work was
intentional.

B. Cheating on Exams and Other Assignments

Cheating is acting dishonestly or deceptively in connection with an assignment, examination or other activity related to a course.

Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:

Copying another person's work during an examination;
Allowing another person to copy one's work;
Using unauthorized materials during an examination;
Obtaining test materials before they are administered;
Having someone take an exam in one's place; and
Taking an exam for someone else.

It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the faculty member concerning
what constitutes permissible collaboration.

Disability

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, please see related note in the box below.

Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/)
  - *(This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)*
- Academic Integrity Tutorial *(found on Angel and SU Online)*

Academic Policies on Registrar website
(https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy *(only for those professional programs to which it applies)*